

Byelorussians stage strike

MOSCOW (AP) — Tens of thousands of workers Tuesday staged their second strike this month in the Byelorussian capital of Minsk to protest the government's refusal to address their political and economic demands. The workers oppose steep government price increases, demand the resignation of President Mikhail Gorbachev and want a special session of the republic's legislature. The strike did not appear to be as large as a walkout staged April 10-11 in the industrial city. About 40,000 to 50,000 people marched from their factories to Minsk's central Lenin Square for a rally, said Igor Geremenchuk, a legislator and member of the Byelorussian Popular Front. He said strike committee organisers estimated at least 40 enterprises had joined the walkout. During the previous strike, organisers claimed 200,000 people stopped working in Minsk and several other cities. More than 60 enterprises — including Minsk's tractor works, auto plant and electronics factory — were in the city of 1.5 million people, although transport, communications, stores and other essential enterprises functioned fully.

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Aziz in Tunis

TUNIS (R) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz is in Tunis at the start of a North African tour, the first by a senior Iraqi leader since the end of the Gulf war. Mr. Aziz arrived on Monday night from Amman where he met Foreign Minister Taher Al Maasri. Citizens of the five North African states were sympathetic to Iraq during the war.

Kuwait 'changing views' on boycott of Israel

NEW YORK (R) — Kuwait has indicated a willingness to abandon part of the Arab boycott of Israel and do business with U.S. companies that also work with the Jewish state, according to American Jewish leaders. The leaders said they learned this from Thomas Pickering, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, during a meeting on Sunday. Mr. Pickering's office declined comment and a spokesman for Kuwait was not immediately available for comment. But diplomatic sources said there were indications that Kuwait was willing to drop its ban on American companies doing business with Israel although it would keep the ban on direct dealing with Israel, which it does not recognise.

Ghali visits Rabat

RABAT (R) — Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali has arrived in Morocco for talks with government leaders, the official news agency MAP said Tuesday. Mr. Ghali, who arrived on Sunday, told MAP before leaving Cairo he would discuss the Palestinian question, an Arab League meeting to be held in Cairo in mid-May, and the Non-Aligned Movement conference due to open in Accra in September.

Israeli gunboat intercepts boat

SIDON (R) — An Israeli gunboat intercepted a passenger boat off South Lebanon and diverted it to Israel, port sources reported Tuesday. They said the Belize, carrying 15 Palestinian and Lebanese passengers to Cyprus, was intercepted Sunday off the port town of Sidon, 40 kilometres south of Beirut. It was not known which port the boat was taken to. The captain is Bulgarian and the crew are Lebanese and Egyptians.

Harvard teams to assess Iraqi deaths

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (R) — A group of U.S. lawyers and doctors are to travel to Iraq this week in an attempt to assess the extent of civilian deaths during the Gulf war, organisers of the trip said. The mission organised by Harvard's Schools of Law and Public Health, will also deliver two tonnes of medical supplies to the Iraqi Red Crescent. The Harvard team has compiled a list of 50 sites bombed by allied forces in which civilians were either killed or injured. Lawyers will visit each site and gather information through observation and through interviews. The team's doctors plan to conduct nutritional surveys and assess health services in hospitals and clinics in Baghdad and outlying areas.

Khomeini: Iran-U.S. ties impossible

TEHRAN (R) — The son of Iran's late leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini says his country can never contemplate resuming relations with the United States. In a sharp rebuke of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's moderate diplomacy, Ahmad Khomeini said: "I state frankly that we cannot have ties with the United States. Our relations will forever be that of a sheep with a wolf." The Tehran newspaper Abrar on Tuesday quoted him as saying: "The simple-minded ones who think our economic and political problems with the West and the United States can be solved are terribly mistaken."

Kurds say peace talks positive, will continue

LONDON (R) — Kurdish guerrillas negotiating for autonomy with the Baghdad government said Tuesday that three days of talks had gone well and would continue.

"The talks are moving in a positive direction," said one Kurdish exile in London who was in contact with guerrilla leaders in northern Iraq Monday evening. A senior Iraqi source also told Arab diplomats in the Middle East that the talks were "very positive and the government is quite happy with them."

Kurdish sources in London said the rebel delegation, headed by veteran campaigner Jalal Talabani, was trying to secure Kurdish autonomy within a democratically-run Iraq.

The talks were with "very high level officials," they said but did not say whether they were with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein himself.

"President Saddam" has been portraying himself as stepping aside from power, resigning as prime minister. It has been more on a government level, although

of course we all know who stands behind the government," a Kurdistan front spokesman said. He said there was still deep mistrust of the government.

Forces loyal to the government crushed a Kurdish rebellion last month. More than one million Kurds fled their homes and into freezing mountains on the Iranian and Turkish borders.

"We have come to the conclusion that a military uprising is not the solution. There has to be a political solution guaranteed by outside forces, namely the United Nations," a spokesman for the Kurdistan front said.

They are also pressing their political case with Western governments, building on the international recognition of their plight provoked by the suffering of the refugees.

A delegation of Kurdish leaders had talks with U.S. State Department officials in Washington Monday and Kurdish delegates joined a group of Iraqi exiles who met a Foreign Office minister in London.

The spokesman said the Kurds had "made arrangements to secure the safety of the men in Baghdad," but gave no details.

A prominent Iraqi exile in London said President Saddam had sent a number of senior officials to stay with Kurdish forces near the town of Erbil as a pledge that no harm would come to the Kurdish delegation during the talks.

The front spokesman said he could not confirm that.

The Iraqi exile, who asked not to be identified, said it appeared President Saddam had made clear he would offer the Kurds much of what they want.

Apart from autonomy, they are demanding free elections throughout Iraq, Kurdish participation in decision-making at all levels, and the inclusion of the oil-producing Kirkuk region in the Kurdish autonomous area.

Non-Kurdish Iraqi groups have condemned the decision by the Kurdish leadership in the mountains of northern Iraq to negotiate directly with the government, although they believe an agreement is quite possible.

American-Iraqi tension mounts as allied presence is increased

ARMED IRAQIS were seen in the Iraqi border city of Zakho Tuesday to the growing alarm of U.S. troops setting up camps nearby for Kurdish refugees.

"Intimidation levels are really growing. It's a very, very tricky situation. I'm telling you, it's getting wild over there," U.S. marine Staff Sergeant Lee Tibbets told reporters.

"We've had people coming near our compound at night. I don't know who they were. We can't go into buildings in Zakho after dark. It's too dangerous," he said.

Sgt. Tibbets, one of the first marines to reach Zakho Saturday, said unexplained shooting broke out on Monday night. "We saw bullets. We don't know what it was. It's not a good feeling sitting there at night," he said.

The United States has sent a naval battle group to the Mediterranean Sea off Turkey as a warning to Iraq not to interfere with U.S. troops, the navy said Tuesday.

The Americans are building refugee camps for thousands of Kurds in northern Iraq. Navy officers said the aircraft

Iraq asks U.N. to take over U.S. refugee camps for Kurds

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Baghdad Tuesday formally asked the United Nations to take over the Kurdish refugee camps the United States is setting up in northern Iraq.

U.N. spokesman Nadia Younes said the United Nations was studying the request from Iraqi Minister Ahmad Hussein, and had relayed a copy to Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in Paris.

The U.S. mission to the United Nations had no immediate response.

The Iraqi letter calls the U.S. military effort "a serious, unjustifiable and unfounded attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq."

It notes, however, that Baghdad has not taken any steps to block that establishment of the camps near Zakho.

carried Theodore Roosevelt and the guided missile cruiser Richmond K. Turner had moved from the Red Sea to bolster ships of the Sixth Fleet off the coast of Turkey and close to northern Iraq.

"By having air assets, that provides another degree of flexibility in case the refugee camps come under attack," said a U.S. navy source.

Hundreds of Iraqi policemen carrying automatic weapons were reported milling around a refugee

camp being set up near Zakho; the Iraqis watched but did not interfere with U.S. forces setting up tents, a U.S. military spokesman said.

While bolstering forces near northern Iraq, the United States continued to remove troops in the south.

U.S. officers reported that troop strength throughout the Gulf region continued to drop drastically, to 237,000 Tuesday.

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Iranians paint their insignia on Iraqi planes which sought shelter

TEHRAN (AP) — Iranian crews have begun painting their air force insignia on some of the Iraqi warplanes that sought into the Islamic republic during the Gulf war, diplomats said Tuesday.

The claim, which could not be independently confirmed, indicates that Tehran plans to keep at least some of the military aircraft that sought refuge from the allied air offensive in neighbouring Iraq.

In another sign that Tehran plans to hold on to the planes, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Sunday that only 22 aircraft, including some fighters taken from Kuwait, "would be returned when the crisis is over."

The rest, he said, either crashed or were shot down by allied jet fighters before they could land.

He did not specify which types of aircraft were among the 22 he cited, but stressed that the fate of the planes would be decided by Iran and Iraq with the help of the United Nations.

Iraq insisted April 12 that 148 of its military and civilian planes made it to Iran. U.S. military spokesman said that some 137 Iraqi planes were in Iran.

The Iraqi listed the 115 military aircraft as 24 Mirage F-18, 24 Sukhoi SU-24s, 40 SU-22s, four SU-20s, seven SU-25s, 12 MiG-23S and four MiG-29s.

The civilian aircraft were listed

as two Boeing 747s, two Boeing 737s, one Boeing 727, one Boeing 707, 15 Ilyushin IL-76s, two Mystere Falcon 20s, three Falcon 50s, one Lockheed Jetstar and six Airbus, believed to be among the 14 Kuwaiti airliners the Iraqis seized when they invaded Kuwait.

Asian and Gulf diplomats in Tehran, speaking on condition of anonymity, cited reports from two unidentified Iranian government officials as saying Iran's military had affixed air force insignia on at least 15 planes, located near the northwestern city of Tabriz.

An American reporter said he saw another three planes being repainted near a highway between Tehran and the holy city of Qom, 160 kilometres south of the capital.

"There were three planes that were clearly Iraqi in the process of being repainted. They appeared to have Iraqi markings," said Tom Squitieri of USA today.

He said Iranian soldiers were giving the planes a coat of fresh paint, but he did not see any Iranian insignias being affixed to the jets.

One Arab diplomat identified the planes as some of the "better MiGs and Sukhois." That indicated they were likely the top-line MiG-29 interceptors and long-range SU-24 fighter-bombers. Iran recently took delivery of

14 MiG-29s from the Soviet Union. It is also reported to have some MiG-21 interceptors and to have ordered an undisclosed number of SU-24s, MiG-23s and more MiG-29s.

These apparently will replace its aging, and largely grounded, fleet of U.S.-made F-4s and F-5s purchased before the 1979 revolution.

The exodus from Iraq was one of the great mysteries of the war. Analysts generally agreed that Baghdad ordered it to save its air force from withering allied attacks.

U.S. officials said after the war that Iraq lost 56 fixed-wing jets, and five helicopters destroyed, with another 140 believed destroyed in underground shelters.

The Iraqis impounded the Iraqi jets and said they would be returned after hostilities ceased. But Iran's polite relations with Baghdad during the war have nosedived in recent weeks, promoting speculation that Tehran would probably keep most of the aircraft.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Tuesday his country wanted the United Nations to supervise refugee camps in northern Iraq.

Mr. Velayati, in Denmark as part of a three-nation European tour, also called for a collective international effort to help Kurdish refugees.

Iraqi cabinet gets more power

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, continuing a series of political changes, has turned many of his powers over to the cabinet, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported Tuesday.

The news agency said the ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) headed by President Saddam had decided to revoke a 22-year-old decree which gave the cabinet's powers to the president.

It was not immediately clear if the move would affect the workings of Iraq's government.

But it appeared to be in line with a series of changes over the past year aimed at giving Iraq's government the framework of a democracy.

President Saddam promised on March 16, that Iraq was entering a "new political era" with freer public debate and multiple political parties.

The government allowed parliamentary elections in 1989 for the first time since 1980.

Last July, it announced a proposed new constitution that would offer presidential elections and greater political freedoms.

In recent years, the government has allowed slightly broader public debate about government policies and performance, although it has punished any open criticism of the president himself.

President Saddam, who had been prime minister since becoming president in 1979, gave up the post when he appointed Baath Party veteran Saadoun Hammadi prime minister on March 23.

INA said the newspaper did not say when the RCC issued the decree, which appears to regularise the legal status of the Hammadi government.

Baker holds extended talks with Assad, to meet Bessmertnykh

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker held extended talks Tuesday with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad without any clear indication whether his Mideast peace mission will succeed or fail.

However, a side trip to the Soviet Union was added to Mr. Baker's agenda.

Mr. Assad wants to be sure the outcome will include the return of territory held by Israel on the Golan Heights.

In Washington, White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater said Mr. Baker has been reporting to U.S. President George Bush by telephone and cable and that a cable was received Tuesday at the White House.

"We feel the secretary has had productive talks during his visits in the Middle East," Mr. Fitzwater said without elaboration.

Mr. Baker met briefly Monday night with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa after arriving from Kuwait. He then met with Mr. Assad for more than six

hours. Leaving his hotel to meet the Syrian leader, Mr. Baker told reporters he had talked with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir by telephone.

His spokesman subsequently confirmed that Mr. Baker told Mr. Shamir he would be going to the Soviet Union from Syria and would arrive in Israel Thursday night instead of Tuesday night as planned.

"The prime minister said he looked forward to seeing the secretary," said Margaret Tutwiler.

She said Mr. Baker gave Mr. Shamir "a quick readout" of his talks over the past few days with the leaders of Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Baker planned to go to Kislovodsk on Wednesday to meet with Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh. He arranged to fly to Israel Thursday. He now is to meet Mr. Shamir on Friday before returning to Washington.

The meeting in the Caucasus spa town of Kislovodsk raised speculation that Mr. Baker may be making progress on his peace mission and that he may be prepared to announce U.S.-Soviet sponsorship of a regional peace conference.

A central part of Mr. Baker's plans call for a Soviet and American-sponsored peace conference. Israeli sources say the Jewish state will accept Kremlin participation only if Moscow restores full diplomatic relations, severed 24 years ago.

Diplomats said Mr. Baker was expected to have two rounds of talks with Mr. Assad. U.S. officials said Mr. Baker had so far received no Israeli response to specific questions about the approach to the peace conference.

According to Israeli news reports, the questions include a possible role for the United Nations.

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PLO wants U.N. 'presence' in peace conference, Dumas

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) wants a United Nations "presence" in a proposed peace conference that has become the focus of U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East, France's foreign minister said Tuesday.

As Foreign Minister Roland Dumas described the PLO position, it would appear an easing of the long-standing demand that any talks between Israel and the Arabs be under U.N. auspices.

Mr. Dumas told reporters that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat spoke with him about proposals being discussed by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker during a tour of Israel and Arab states.

The French minister said he met with Mr. Arafat in Libya, from where Mr. Dumas flew to Cairo Tuesday morning.

"I discussed with him the American proposals," Mr. Dumas said in French through an Arabic interpreter. "Arafat

wants to know details of these proposals. He supports the presence of the United Nations in peace talks."

Mr. Baker is advocating an Israeli plan for a regional conference with the United States and the Soviet Union but not formally the United Nations. Besides opposing U.N. involvement, Israel is reported reluctant to participate by the European Community.

With some backing from Mr. Baker, Arabs want a broader conference in which the Soviets and Europeans as well as the United States would have meaningful roles.

On three regional tours since early March, Mr. Baker met with Palestinian personalities from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza who said they had been sanctioned by the PLO.

Mr. Dumas' portrayal of Mr. Arafat as seeking details of the peace proposals would indicate

that Mr. Baker did not brief the Palestinians fully on the conference plan.

"Regarding Palestinian participation in the conference, which is the problem at present, Arafat will discuss it with representatives of the Palestinian people and the Arab countries," Mr. Dumas said.

In Tunis, Mr. Arafat criticised Mr. Baker's proposals but stopped short of openly rejecting them, Palestinian sources said.

They said Mr. Arafat called for flexibility at a meeting of 100 senior members of the Palestine Central Council Sunday and Monday at a secret location in Tunis.

While hardliners on the council have called for a rejection of Mr. Baker's proposals, Mr. Arafat said he "rejected the formula (offering) more autonomy and less than a Palestinian state."

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Settlers clash with Peace Now activists

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli settlers and peace activists clashed Tuesday outside a Jewish settlement, set up in the occupied West Bank in the midst of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's Middle East shuttle.

The United States has repeatedly criticised the settlements as an obstacle to a land-for-peace compromise with the Palestinians.

Noam Arnon, spokesman for the Gush Emunim settlement movement, defended the new community, named Talmon B.

"Whoever thinks that the existence of Jews anywhere in Israel is an obstacle to peace and order, such a man has Nazi opinions," Mr. Arnon said.

He added: "I wonder at Americans identifying with this. I thought racism and fascism had disappeared, but fear that here

are signs of such thinking."

The new settlement is 20 kilometres northwest of Jerusalem. It is about two kilometres north of another settlement, Talmon, and Arnon and other Jewish settlement activists say it is "an annex" to the existing community.

Amiram Goldblum of Peace Now scoffed at the settlers' claims that Talmon B was an annex.

"You have to cross a wadi and go over three mountains to get to the new settlement," Mr. Goldblum charged.

He called it "a provocation of the Israeli government against peace."

Mr. Goldblum said at least one Peace Now activist was hurt in the scuffle with settlers at the site.

Demonstrators arrived at the site following local news reports that settlers had secretly built the

new settlement near Ramallah.

The clash took place 10 kilometres from Ramallah at the site where eight mobile homes were built this week near the existing settlement of Talmon.

Fifteen activists of the "Peace Now" organisation arrived Tuesday carrying a sign saying: "Shamir builds settlements to destroy peace."

Group spokesman Eran Hayet said scuffles broke. One demonstrator, two soldiers guarding the area and Eli Fastman, a cameraman for the Visnews international television news agency, were injured.

"Mr. Fastman said the protesters clashed with six settlers, backed by residents of neighbouring communities. Sporadic scuffles went on for nearly two hours before the army closed the area. He said his camera gear was damaged."

But witnesses said at least two kilometres separated the new units from Talmon and accused the settlers of putting them up secretly to avoid public condemnation.

Israelis last week secretly put up another settlement, Revava, which they said was meant to signal Mr. Baker that Israel would not abandon the occupied territories.

"It's not new that there is ongoing expansion but here we are speaking of a new settlement — like Revava — on the very day that Baker is supposed to be here," the Peace Now spokesman told Reuters.

Pinhas Wallerstein, a leader of the settlers, told Israel Radio the newest housing had the proper government permits and did not constitute a new community.

Missile attack kills hopes for Afghan settlement

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Hope for a political end to Afghanistan's bloody civil war has faded since two missiles slammed into a northeastern Afghan market, killing hundreds, Pakistan and Afghan sources said Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Pakistan and the Soviet Union on Tuesday accused each other of stalling efforts to try to peacefully end the war.

United Nations officials said high-level talks on Afghanistan were to have started Sunday between Pakistan, where U.S.-backed guerrillas are based, and the Soviet Union, which supports the Communist-style government in Kabul.

But the fate of that meeting appeared uncertain, largely due to the guerrillas' capture of the southern Afghan town of Khost last month and the Scud missile attack on the northeastern city of Asadabad, the capital of Afghanistan's Kumar province.

In a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, Pakistan "condemned the destruction caused by the criminal use of mass destruction weapons against the Afghan population."

Details of the letter were carried by the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan.

"The use of mass destruction weapons... illustrates the regime's desperation and damaged the prospects for a political settlement in Afghanistan," the letter said.

Soviet officials accused Pakistan of bowing to proponents of a military rather than political solution to the 13-year-old war.

Guerrillas echoed the accusatory words.

"There can be no political solution now," said Minhaj, a spokesman for the Afghan rebels.

"We will take our revenge. This will put an end to all those Mujahideen who talked about a

political settlement with the Kabul regime," said Minhaj.

As many as 400 people were killed Saturday when a pair of Scud missiles slammed into Asadabad. The Scuds decimated a sprawling bazaar of wooden shops, injuring at least another 700 people.

Guerrillas were still searching the debris for bodies Tuesday, said Minhaj.

Afghanistan's government has been silent except for a brief reference on state-owned Radio Kabul Monday to a rocket attack by a radical guerrilla group led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

But one Soviet official said the attack was in retaliation for Khost.

"Think of what happened. Bodies (of soldiers) were left to the dogs and jackals," he said. "Khost was the first step and now this (Asadabad) is the second step."

Mr. Hekmatyar, never a strong

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Mubarak answers Shamir on Mideast peace process

CAIRO (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak Tuesday answered a message he received from Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir early this month, a presidential spokesman said.

Mohammad Abdul Moneim said Mr. Mubarak's reply was relayed to Mr. Shamir Tuesday afternoon by Egypt's ambassador to Israel.

Mr. Mubarak's answer dealt with the Middle East peace process and the basic requirements for achieving a just settlement, Mr. Abdul Moneim said without elaboration.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shamir was quoted by a leading state-owned newspaper as saying that Israel wants to normalise relations with Arab states and at the same time negotiate with the Palestinians on the basis of his 1989 initiative that calls for a limited self-rule for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

"We want to normalise relations with the Arab countries and at the same time, negotiate with the Palestinians. It is not logical to separate the Palestinian question from the political and economic background of the region," Mr. Shamir said in an interview with Al Ahram.

"Moving the Palestinian problem would lead to the normalisation of the Arab-Israeli relations," Mr. Shamir said in the interview with Al Ahram's Anis Mansour.

Mr. Shamir made clear that normalisation of relations meant putting an end to the state of war between Arab states and Israel since 1948, the Arab boycott of the Jewish state and the arms race.

"Conventional weapons are

more dangerous than the unconventional arms," Mr. Shamir said without elaboration. Israel is said to be in possession of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Shamir urged Egypt to carry on the role it played in the U.S.-sponsored negotiations with Israel at Camp David 1978 which produced a peace treaty between the two countries a year later.

The Palestinian section of the Camp David accords provided for limited Palestinian self-rule for a 5-year transition period with negotiations to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza and its relationship with its neighbours. It was never applied.

Mr. Shamir however said he read a published remark by Mr. Mubarak two years ago in which the Egyptian president expressed regret that Egypt was no longer able to continue such a role because of Arab opposition.

Mr. Mubarak said on several occasions that this part of the accords is now dead.

Mr. Shamir ruled out any role for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), in any future negotiations.

He said such negotiations should be limited to representatives elected by the people in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Israeli prime minister also ruled out any possibility for returning the Golan Heights to Syria in any future negotiations.

"Have you ever heard of any country that was ready to change its territory," Mr. Shamir said of the heights which Israel "annexed" after taking it in the 1967 war along with the West Bank and Gaza.

Greece holds bombing suspect

ATHENS (AP) — A Palestinian believed to be connected to a bombing which killed seven people in southwestern Greece has been arrested and held for questioning, the public order minister announced Tuesday.

Public Order Minister Yannis Vassiliades said that Assar Al Nobani, who holds both Jordanian and Israeli passports, was arrested in the public order ministry.

Asked by reporters to explain how he was apprehended in the ministry, Mr. Vassiliades replied: "Please don't press me for further details."

He said that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) which maintains an embassy here, cooperated in the search and discovery of Nobani.

Nobani, a former chemistry student at Salonica University in northern Greece, was expelled shortly after the Gulf war started but apparently reentered the country clandestinely.

The explosion in the port of Patras, 180 kilometres from the capital Friday, killed seven people and injured at least eight others. Police believe that the bomber carrying 12 kilograms of explosives in a plastic bag was also killed by the powerful blast.

No group has claimed responsibility for the explosion.

Police said Monday that their investigation so far strongly indicated that 26-year-old Palestinian student Ahmad Al Hashikeh, was carrying the explosives which exploded as he was leaving a centrally located building in Patras. The blast ripped apart an air courier service office on the ground floor, killing at least five employees and a customer. Six of the dead have been identified by relatives but the seventh body remained unclaimed and unidentified.

The Public Order Ministry said that tattered pieces of a student identity card collected at the scene of the explosion indicated that the mutilated body was Hashikeh, a student attending Patras Polytechnic University. However, the ministry failed to offer any evidence that the body and the student identity card belonged to the same man.

Mr. Vassiliades said Nobani was apprehended at 8:30 a.m. (0530 GMT) Tuesday and that many other people have been taken in for questioning. He said that Hashikeh's Greek girlfriend who lives in an apartment on the sixth floor of the building hit by the blast was also being held.

U.N. force poised to move to south Iraq

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — United Nations peacekeepers will move into southern Iraq Wednesday, and American troops will withdraw, a U.N. official said Tuesday.

There are more than 11,000 refugees at a U.S.-run camp in Safwan, Iraq.

Majed Fayad, the spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping mission, said Tuesday he did not expect any security problems when the U.N. establishes its first observation post in Safwan.

Major General Gunther Greindl, head of the peacekeepers, met with the Iraqi government over the weekend to discuss security arrangements.

"We were assured by cooperation and assistance," Mr. Fayad said of the talks.

When the full 1,440-strong U.N. contingent is in place, it will patrol the buffer zone along the entire Iraq-Kuwait border, a distance of 190 kilometres. It stretches 10 kilometres into Iraq and five kilometres into Kuwait.

But the Iraqi and Kuwaiti governments will handle all civilian administration in their territory, including law enforcement.

On Wednesday the U.N. will only take over about a third of the buffer zone, from the coastal town of Um Qasr to a point west of Safwan. About 15 to 20 military observers and an undetermined number of infantry soldiers would be deployed to set up the first post, Mr. Fayad said.

Critics say Gulf war weapons were overrated

WASHINGTON (AP) — Missiles and aircraft such as the Patriot and Stealth fighter, heralded for their showing in the Gulf war, performed far below the military's glowing assessment, experts told Congress Monday.

"The country has been poorly served by the shamelessly doctored statistics and hand-selected video clips of isolated successes that were pumped out to the media during the war in order to influence post-war budget decisions," said Pierre Sprey, a former special assistant to the assistant secretary of defence for systems analysis.

He cast aspersions on the Patriot and Tomahawk missiles, the Stealth fighter and the AV-8B Harrier jet.

Meanwhile, the Congressional Research Service issued a report on the Gulf war that found the Patriot missile provided only "modest anti-tactical ballistic missile capabilities" and urged the Pentagon to consider weapons superior to the Patriot to thwart the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

The air force's A-10 slow-speed tactical bomber, however, performed far better than the service expected, witnesses said.

Citing uncensored information that emerged after disagreements between Israeli and U.S. officials, Mr. Sprey said that very few of Scud warheads intercepted by Patriot missiles were stopped from hitting the ground and exploding.

The army has said that 45 of 47 Scud missiles were successfully intercepted.

The congressional research service, in a report on the implications of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm for the future military, said the Patriot performed fairly well against the unsophisticated, single-warhead Scud.

The Patriot intercepts, however, occurred at short range, causing debris to fall on targets the Patriot was deployed to protect.

All American and Iraqi troops must be out of this zone by midday Wednesday, Mr. Fayad added.

About 5,000 U.S. soldiers were in the Iraqi section of the demilitarised zone as of the past weekend, according to American officials.

About 40,000 refugees, almost all Iraqis, are in or near the buffer zone. Mr. Fayad said the U.N. peacekeepers have no mandate to conduct humanitarian operations, but officials from the U.N. High Commission for Refugees were in the border area assessing the situation.

The refugee agency has not announced any plans to assume responsibility for the camp. U.S. troops in Safwan said as recently as Sunday that they were unaware of any firm U.N. plans to move in.

U.S. troops said Sunday they had the impression they could be in the area for two to four more weeks.

Many refugees say they are desperate to emigrate to any country, but no country has offered to take them.

Kuwaitis say they do not want large numbers of Iraqi refugees in their country for an extended period of time, though the Kuwaiti Red Crescent has been caring for about 6,000 refugees, mostly Iraqis, at a camp in the northern border town of Abdaly, adjacent to the U.S. camp in Safwan.

Rafsanjani: Messages on hostages exchanged with U.S.

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani has said that there have been message exchanges with Washington over a possible swap of Muslim detainees for Western hostages in Lebanon.

But he gave no indication if these contacts have made any progress toward ending the saga of hundreds of Lebanese detained by Israel, four Iraqis captured and reportedly killed by Lebanese militiamen and 13 Westerners missing in Lebanon.

Mr. Rafsanjani's remarks were published by the Persian daily newspaper Ettelaat as part of a wide-ranging interview that also touched on domestic and international issues. The text was carried by the official Islamic Republic News agency.

Asked about reports of contacts between the United States and Iran, Mr. Rafsanjani said these were mostly in the form of message exchanges through a third party and dealing with the hostage issue.

"As you know, the Swiss embassy in Tehran is functioning as the interest section of the United States," he said. "The Americans send their messages to our foreign ministry through the Swiss embassy."

"They are studied and response to them is given to the Swiss diplomats. Well, they may do the same through Turkey and similar countries," he added. "The Americans sometimes have something to say about the hostages," Mr. Rafsanjani said.

The ordeal of the hostages, he said, also was discussed by Iranian and U.S. representatives to a claims tribunal in the Hague which has been trying to resolve financial claims between Iran and the United States.

The financial disputes were sparked by the break in ties that followed the 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran by militants who held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

"Each of the two countries wants the other side to use its influence in Lebanon. The U.S. has influence on the Israelis and the (Lebanese) Lalangists. The Islamic Republic's influence on the Lebanese Muslims is a natural affair," he said.

Mr. Rafsanjani did not link the return of Iranian assets frozen by Washington to the fate of the hostages as other radical Iranian officials had done.

A reputed pragmatist, Mr. Rafsanjani said only that unfreezing the assets, which Iran claims are worth \$11 billion, was a precondition for a restoration of diplomatic relations.

The Westerners missing in Lebanon are six Americans, four Britons, two Germans and an Italian. Most of them are believed held by pro-Iranian zealots.

Iran has demanded in return for using its influence on the kidnappers that the West help shed light on the fate of four Iraqis who were kidnapped in the Christian heartland in north Lebanon in 1982.

Christian militia commanders say the Iraqis are dead. Tehran says it wants proof of that.

Iran also backs the demand that Israel free more than 300 Lebanese detainees from detention centre in the Israeli-occupied border strip in South Lebanon.

Israel, for its part, wants the Lebanese to free seven servicemen captured during military operations in Lebanon in the 1980s. Three of the Israelis are believed still alive, but there others are feared dead.

800,000 Iraqis hiding in south Iraq marshes — Iran

NICOSIA (R) — More than 800,000 Iraqis living in pitiful conditions in marshlands of southern Iraq, Tehran Radio quoted an Iraqi rebel source as saying on Monday.

There was no independent confirmation of the rebel's report. Tehran, which has been swamped by about one million fleeing Iraqis, has been trying to draw world attention to the plight of mainly Shi'ite refugees in the south.

The unnamed source said many of the refugees, especially children and old people, were dying because of lack of food and medicine and diseases endemic in the hot, inhospitable marshes.

"More than 800,000 people of southern Iraq, forced to abandon their homes, are living in wretched conditions in marshes of southern Iraq," he said.

"With the world's attention focused on Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq, the existence of hundreds of thousands of refugees in southern Iraq is forgotten," the radio said.

Shi'ites in southern Iraq were the first to rebel in February.

Iraq cracked down on the unrest and another rebellion by the Kurds in the north, sending millions on a desperate flight to the Iranian and Turkish borders.

Iran's Interior Minister Abdolrahman Nouri said Iran was already hosting 50,000 Iraqi refugees in the south and 900,000 in the north, the radio reported.

Many of the refugees settled in southern Iranian provinces were still short of food, shelter and sanitation, it said.

Iran had earlier reported more than a million Iraqi refugees had crossed its borders.

In the north, some 200,000 of the refugees are living in tents,

public places or the open air in the Kurdish border town of San-dash, which was Iran's coldest town in the past 24 hours at 1 degree Celsius (34 Fahrenheit).

Tehran Radio quoted refugees waiting for entry to Iran's Kurdistan province as saying typhoid, cholera and other diseases were spreading on dangerous scales.

"The death of children and old people because of extreme cold, hunger and lack of hygiene is on the rise," it said.

Mr. Nouri was speaking to the French president's wife, Danielle Mitterrand, who inspected relief operations in the northwest Iranian city of Orumiye.

Mrs. Mitterrand said she would publicise the fact that Iran could not cope with the influx without international help, the radio said.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Sunday 108 plane loads of supplies had arrived in Iran from abroad but it went nowhere near meeting the needs of the refugees.

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, in an interview published Monday, said: "We are now carrying out our human, Islamic duties..."

"We will try to return the refugees to Iraq at the first possible opportunity. While in Iran, they should stay in fenced camps, away from the people of our country."

Tehran Radio said in a commentary the international relief effort was inadequate and what aid was forthcoming went mostly to Turkey, which has 500,000 Kurdish refugees on its border.

It claimed people throughout Iraq were under attack and therefore the allied plan of creating safe havens only in northern Iraq did not solve the problem.

Death sought for 19 for Mahjoub murder

CAIRO (AP) — The government demanded the death penalty on Tuesday for 19 of 25 alleged Muslim extremists charged in last October's assassination of Egypt's parliament speaker.

Prosecutor-General Badr Al Minyawy told reporters 12 of the 25 remain at large, although investigators arrested hundreds of suspects in the Oct. 12 downtown Cairo ambush. People still held but not listed on the charge sheet are being released, Mr. Minyawy said. He refused to disclose how many that involves.

He said the defendants list does not include the names of two alleged conspirators shot dead while resisting arrest a day after the shooting of Rifaat Al Mahgoub, speaker of the People's Assembly.

Men with submachine guns

opened fire on a three-car motorcade carrying Mr. Mahjoub and his security detail as it passed a luxury hotel. The speaker and four others were killed. A sixth man was shot dead as the assailants escaped on motorcycles.

The prosecutor-general said the basis of the demand that 19 plot leaders be hanged is their "criminal complicity... aimed at carrying out felonies to destabilise general order and security."

He said only seven participated in the assassination. The prosecution demanded unspecified prison terms for the remaining six defendants on charges they hid two of the suspects to keep them from being caught.

According to Mr. Minyawy, the extremists' target was Interior Minister Abdul Halim Musa.

Firefighters still irked at logistical problems

By David Crary
The Associated Press

GREAT BURGAN OIL FIELDS, Kuwait — Equipment shortages, bureaucratic delays and inadequate water supplies continue to hamper efforts to extinguish the roughly 500 blazing wells in Kuwait's sabotaged oil fields, firefighters say.

Crew chiefs from the three Texas companies involved in the massive operation detailed their problems in a private meeting Monday with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

"We told him things were going a little slow," said Coots Matthews of Houston-based Boots and Coots Co. "We need more equipment, more water and a little more help from the Kuwait government."

Kuwait's pace was "slow at best," Mr. Matthews said. He reported that Mr. Baker promised to do what he could to speed

things up. Larry Flak, coordinator of the firefighting operation, said crews had controlled 60 of the sabotaged wells, either extinguishing fires or capping those which were spewing unlit oil. He said the crews now were putting out fires at a rate of roughly three a day.

As of two weeks ago, one of the worst problems facing the firefighters was long delays of equipment at the Saudi Arabian border. Mr. Flak said heavy equipment now was being brought to Kuwait by ship to avoid these delays.

On April 13, then-Oil Minister Rasheed Al Amiri said the firefighting job was too big for the four companies initially signed on — Red Adair, Boots and Coots, and Wild Well Control Co. of Texas, and Safety Boss of Alberta, Canada.

Mr. Amiri said teams would be required worldwide in an effort to put out the fires in seven months

instead of the original projection of two years.

Mr. Amiri, who did not consult with the North American companies before making his announcement, was ousted when a new cabinet was named Saturday.

Mr. Flak said the new oil minister, Hamud Al Ruqba, was a "get-along kind of guy" who promised the firefighters full support.

Mr. Flak said it was likely that more teams would be added to the operation, but not until contractors hired by Kuwait to handle logistics obtained more equipment and tools arrived.

Said Mr. Matthews: "They can't supply the teams they have now."

Mr. Flak said some of the equipment provided to the teams was shoddy.

"They shipped us some junk equipment," he said. "We

screamed about it. They don't ship us junk any more."

Mr. Matthews and other firefighters cited water shortages as a critical problem, although Mr. Flak said progress had been made. He said pipelines linking the Greater Burgan oil field with the Gulf were able to fill a lagoon with 500,000 gallons in 12 hours.

Mr. Flak said "a bunch of fires" — but not all — would be out within seven months. "It will be a lot less smoky then, and a lot nicer a place to live."

Mr. Baker, wearing khaki pants and a Texas longhorns polo shirt, visited a site where a Red Adair crew is trying to put out one of the most difficult fires. He conferred inside a small bus with the senior members of the three Texas-based outfits, then walked to a corrugated-metal observation post less than 50 metres from the blazing well to get a closer look.

Red Adair crew leader

Raymond Henry explained to Mr. Baker the team's plans for putting out the fire, a particularly difficult one because oil was spewing in several directions from a badly damaged wellhead.

Mr. Baker, passing on Mr. Henry's explanation to reporters, said the crew hoped to knock off the top of the wellhead with a boom so the oil would spew straight upwards, making it easier to extinguish later, probably with explosives.

Throughout the visit, two pipelines were dousing the ball of fire with 2,000 gallons of water a minute to minimise the heat. The crew said they would not be ready to try to extinguish the fire for at least another day.

Kuwaiti officials say the fires are burning about six million barrels of oil a day, a daily loss of about \$120 million. But British scientists said the lost oil may actually be closer to two million barrels a day.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Children's programme
18:30	Documentary
19:00	News in French
19:15	French varieties
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	After Henry
21:10	Our House
22:00	News in English
22:20	Behaving Badly
PRAYER TIMES	
06:31	Fajr
05:59	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:34	Dhuhr
16:12	'Asr
19:14	Maghrib
20:57	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637285	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terremouth Church Tel. 622466	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Assam International Church Tel. 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932	
The Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
A drop in temperatures and rise in humidity will take place with the appearance of some clouds at low altitudes, and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be westerly moderate to fresh. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm. Min./max. temp. 15 / 25	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Agaba	22 / 31
Deserts	18 / 38
Jordan Valley	20 / 32
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 32, Agaba 36. Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Agaba 22 per cent.	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Walid Al Masri	675485
Dr. Rina Abu Zaid	(-)
Dr. Khalid M'ada	743500
Dr. Kayed Halayya	753522
Firas Pharmacy	661912
Fardous pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637025
Nicoud pharmacy	623072
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shamsi pharmacy	637660

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Rescue	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	643402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630221
Hotel Complaints	605800
Police Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:	
Husseini Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn	642816
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn	642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mallat, J. Amman	636140
Palatine, Smeizani	664171/4
Shamsi Hospital	669321
University Hospital	845845

FOR THE TRAVELLER

Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf	775111/26
Italian, Al-Mushter	777101/5
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf	775111/26
Army, Marfa	891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital	600224/90
Amal Hospital	674155
Zabab	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)991071
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)967362
ICARD:	
Finnish Bessma Hospital	(02)2675535
Green Catholic Hospital	(02)571725
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital	(02)347700
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

4

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information depart-

Princess Sarvath lauds JNRCS services, assumes chairmanship

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Tuesday lauded the humanitarian services of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) and urged its officials to extend such services to all parts of the urban and rural regions of the Kingdom.

"JNRCS efforts and humanitarian services have assumed international standards, offering relief services on a wide scale," the Princess said during a visit to the JNRCS headquarters in Amman marking her assumption of the post of honorary chairmanship of the JNRCS's women branch, as

entrusted to her by Her Majesty Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother, who has been serving as chairperson of the same branch.

The Princess was briefed by JNRCS Vice-President Mohammad Al Hadid on the society's various activities and its roles at the international level as well as the activities of JNRCS branches in various governorates.

The Princess was later accompanied on a tour of the Hial Hospital and the Vocational Training Centre for women, both of which are run by the JNRCS for the benefit of the local women community.



Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Tuesday visits the JNRCS headquarters in Amman (Petra photo)

World Traffic Day to be celebrated for a week

AMMAN (J.T.) — Various towns in Jordan are making plans to celebrate World Traffic Day on May 4, 1991, with the participation of drivers from the Public Transport Corporation, traffic police and members of the local communities.

Reports said that this year's celebration, to be held under the slogan "economic driving and security on the roads," would be held in Amman as well as Zarqa, Irbid, Salt, and Karak, among the main towns of the country.

On the eve of the celebrations the Public Security Department (PSD) released figures about road accidents and casualties in the country during 1990, which marked an increase over the previous year, and said that a public awareness campaign to reduce the accidents was continuing.

According to Brigadier Awmi Mismar, director of the Drivers and Vehicles Licensing department, 379 citizens were killed and 10,464 others injured in 17,836 road accidents that occurred in the Kingdom during 1990.

He said that most of the accidents had occurred due to excessive speed, wrong overtaking and non-observance by traffic regulations.

Brig. Mismar estimated Jordan's total economic losses from these accidents at JD 40 million, represented in medical services, damage to property, and expenses on services entailed in these accidents.

In 1989, Brig. Mismar said, Jordan had 355 people dead and 9,474 injured in 18,336 road accidents. By contrast, 1990 had less accidents than 1989, but a greater

number of dead and injured, largely due to the presence of a large number of vehicles in the country, owned by the Jordanian and Palestinian returnees from Iraq and Kuwait.

On May 4, the country will observe World Traffic Day, an event which will be extended for a whole week and which will witness various types of activities aimed at spreading awareness among members of the public with regard to safety on roads and safe driving, Brig. Mismar said.

He said that drivers, policemen and policewomen and other members of the public would be honoured, during the celebrations at a special ceremony to be held at the Royal Cultural Centre, for their remarkable activities designed to reduce the number of accidents.

The first period at schools will be dedicated to spreading awareness among the school children about safety on the roads, and 10,000 booklets will be distributed to the students and other citizens dealing with sound and effective measures and the proper use of vehicles and saving fuel, Brig. Mismar said.

Furthermore, mechanical checks of various vehicles will be conducted during the week and strict monitoring of speed will be observed, with cars not allowed to exceed 85 kilometres per hour on the highways during the week, Brig. Mismar pointed out.

He said that the booklets and pamphlets to be distributed contain very useful information and tips about technical issues of vehicles and sound ways to conserve fuel.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday visits Dana natural reserve set up in the Tafleeh Governorate (Petra photo)

Natural reserve to protect area, help local villagers

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday visited the Dana natural reserve in the Tafleeh Governorate, a project of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), where she toured the project facilities and met with a number of the village inhabitants.

Dr. Anis Muasher, president of RSCN, presented the Queen with a briefing about the project, which is an integrated approach to conservation, encompassing the protection of the area as well as assistance for the controlled development of the resident people of Dana village and the surrounding area.

The project entails mainly the preservation and protection of the wildlife in that area, which was designated by the RSCN and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as one of twelve reserves in the country.

The 100 square kilometres reserve ranges from wooded mountains in the northern sector to shrub-steppe in the south. Substantial wood cutting for firewood, severe overgrazing and intensive hunting of the area's animals, such as the ibex — which is almost extinct locally — were the major warning signals that prompted the RSCN to choose Dana as a natural reserve.

For that purpose, the RSCN plans an ibex reintroduction programme for Dana, as well as fencing the reserve. The project also includes plans for the renovation and revitalisation of the traditional Dana village, so as to become a stopover for tourists to Petra, Aqaba and visitors to the reserve itself. This, Dr. Muasher said, would imply training the local populace in tourist support services and handicrafts, including those involving the cutting and polishing of the precious and semi-precious stones that exist in the area.

Mr. Muasher said that the society would cooperate with the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), which has conducted a comprehensive plan for the development of the Dana area, through the reconstruction and renovation of village traditional houses, to preserve this important part of the cultural heritage of Jordan, which existed well before the 20th century.

Mr. Isam Zawawi, of the NHF, said that Dana would be part of Al Noor Project for the Development of Rural Areas, which is already applied in a number of villages in Jordan. It entails the establishment of a local development council and committees, and a village development fund, to organise the inhabitants and train them on managing develop-

ment operations in the village. The project also includes plans to provide Dana with various services, like inside roads, water and electricity networks, that have been the major impetus in causing the citizens to move to the nearby village of Al Qadisiyya.

According to Mr. Zawawi, NHF is going to encourage the residents to stay in Dana by providing them with agricultural and educational support to enable them to better and more fully utilise the land and water of the area, and to give them a measure of self-sufficiency. Plans are now underway to implement income-generating projects, such as animal husbandry, bee-keeping and medical herbs.

Dr. Mohammad Al Zaben, minister of municipal and rural affairs and the environment, who accompanied the Queen on the visit, said that his ministry intended to establish a village council in Dana to present it in the operation of touristic, agricultural and economic projects.

Also accompanying Queen Noor were Mr. Bassam Saket, president of the Administrative Council of the Jordan Cement Company, the governor of Tafleeh, secretary general of the ministries of water and irrigation and planning, as well as other officials and notables from the area.

'Discovery will do miracles to the economics of the poor world'

Jordan attends symposium on wildlife protection

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan was among 23 countries from around the world to attend an international symposium in London entitled "wildlife economics and management... policy and practice" which focused attention on a new scientific discovery that would absolutely preserve the lives of all animals on earth.

Jordan was represented at the symposium by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), which continues a drive here to preserve all types of animals, to protect indigenous species and their natural habitat, and preserve the fauna and flora of Jordan as well as reintroduce endangered and locally extinct species to their natural habitats.

The symposium focused attention on the creation of frozen embryos, and later on a frozen zoo, more or less like a data bank of embryos kept frozen by liquid nitrogen, according to Mr. Maher Abu Jaafar, the RSCN's director general who took part in the 18-day symposium and briefed the meeting on Jordan's endeavours, through its wildlife reserves, to conserve the riches of nature.

Only Jordan and Morocco from the Arab World were represented at the meeting during which Professor Ulysses Seal from the United States presented his discovery and his experiments



on white rhinos in Indonesia, complete with video tape, said Abu Jaafar in a statement to the Jordan Times.

Professor Seal, chairman of the Captive Breeding Specialist Group founded in the U.S., has been working for years on this "scientific miracle" before he was able to present it to the world, but, according to Abu Jaafar, experiments are still going on and if they become successful and generalised they will do miracles to the economics of the poor world.

"In addition to the fact that the discovery can help preserve all types of life from extinction, the symposium covered various

aspects of the measures to be taken around the world for the protection and preservation of wildlife, laws related to such processes and strategies needed to promote the conservation of nature," Abu Jaafar said.

"In my address at the symposium, I outlined Jordan's endeavours to promote public awareness of environmental issues and to supervise and enforce rules governing the conservation of nature," Abu Jaafar added.

The RSCN, which was established in 1966, now has created six wildlife reserves in the Kingdom with the objective of protecting the ecosystems with their characteristic faunal, floral and geomorphological features," Abu Jaafar said.

He said that the reserves were those of Azraq wetland, Shauman, Wadi Mujib, Zabys, Dana and Rum.

According to Abu Jaafar, the reserve system as a whole will encompass four per cent of the overall land area of Jordan by the end of the century and will include areas representative of all natural regions of Jordan.

He said that this process allowed the reserve system to support every single type of indigenous species of flora and fauna, making these areas essential for the future survival of Jordan's wildlife.

Symposium tackles the national charter

SALT (Petra) — Maher Youth Club Monday hosted a symposium on the national charter.

Addressing the gathering were members of the Royal Commission of the National Charter Fawzi Tueimeh, Mohammad Adnan Al Bakhit and Chairman of the Cultural Committee at the Club Elayyan Al Jaloudi.

Participants reviewed the historical stages of the foundation of

the Trans-Jordan emirate, the building of Jordan and various Jordanian institutions.

The speakers stressed that the charter represented a qualitative step forward in the march towards progress, and a fruit of the general political détente.

They labelled the charter as a step on the path of enhancing the democratic approach.

Minister assails U.N.'s handling of regional issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Justice Minister Majed Khalifa Tuesday criticised the United Nations for failing to deal fairly with all regional and international problems.

Addressing the 30th session of the Afro-Asian Legal Consultative Committee, held in Cairo, Mr. Khalifa said that the United Nations resolutions were not implemented equally and had fallen short of finding durable and permanent solutions to the chronic problems threatening world peace and security, such as the Palestine problem and the South African problem.

"Failure to embark on immediate actions to address these problems means the enhancement of racial discrimination and a collusion with the Zionist occupation of Palestine," Mr. Khalifa said.

"The United Nations' silence over what is going on in the occupied Arab territories and over the oppressive Israeli measures against the Palestinian people

and the inhuman practices carried out by the racial South African regime is not acceptable at all," Mr. Khalifa said.

He added that the United Nations had mobilised all military, political and economic capacities and resources to find a rapid, though devastating solution to the Gulf crisis while it has failed so far to find a just and honourable solution to the Palestine problem.

Mr. Khalifa suggested that the United Nations Security Council's membership, including its permanent members, be reconsidered with a view to ensuring the representation of the whole world.

He proposed that the council group two permanent members for Africa, two others for Asia and one for Latin America. He based his suggestion on three factors, namely: population density, cultural background and strategic geographical situation.

The minister called for cancelling the right of veto, saying that it was high time this right was cancelled in order to enable the council to carry out its duties efficiently and in a fair manner, without any obstacles.

"If the council is to enforce any resolution by force, then it should seek the approval of the General Assembly, which represents the whole world," Mr. Khalifa said.

The minister voiced hope that the meetings would come up with positive conclusions, reaffirming the commitment of the Asian and African countries to apply the noble ideas and principles contained in the international law.

Mr. Khalifa said that the achievements of the committee over the past years were positive indicators of the committee's performance. He added that the committee sought to lay the foundations for justice and equity among nations and to enhance the concepts of international cooperation.

UNRWA officers discuss operations in Middle East

AMMAN (J.T.) — Public information officers from the five fields of operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) ended a three-day informational session in Amman Tuesday discussing means of promoting the exchange of informational material concerning the agency's operations in the Middle East.

The 10 participants toured the Baqaa refugee camp in the course of their stay here and met with local officials at UNRWA headquarters in Amman.

At a meeting with the director of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs, Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, the group was briefed on the department's development and operations in the Kingdom and on the services to the Palestinian refugees and displaced persons offered by the

Jordanian government in cooperation with UNRWA.

"The Jordanian government allocates nearly JD 3.5 million to finance such services as water, sewerage, electricity and roads related to or serving the refugee camps in Jordan," said Dr. Qatanani at the meeting.

He said that these camps, four before the 1967 war, rose in number to 13 after the war, and their residents continue to receive government assistance which is being distributed through UNRWA field workers.

According to Dr. Qatanani, there are at least 930,000 registered Palestinian refugees in the Kingdom, most of whom benefit from the government's services one way or another.

Dr. Qatanani said that his department issued regular reports

about the situation in the occupied Arab territories focusing attention on Jewish settlement operations, Israel's arbitrary measures against the Arab population, and the eviction of Palestinians from their homeland.

Dr. Qatanani said that donor countries should be urged to increase their contributions to the agency to enable it to pursue its humanitarian services to the refugees.

The 10 participants represented UNRWA's offices in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in addition to the Vienna headquarters. They reviewed the agency's general programme and future plans and discussed means of enhancing cooperation and coordination among the various information offices in the five areas.

Workshop tackles energy generation, conservation

IRBID (Petra) — A scientific workshop on the conservation of energy, organised by the Chemical Engineering Department at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), Tuesday discussed six working papers on conservation of energy in industry.

Head of the Chemical Engineering Department Abdul Rahman Al Tamimi reviewed various sources of energy in Jordan, including old tyres, garbage, hot water, solar energy and hot springs.

He said that the organic residues in the garbage contained a high proportion of cellululosic material, rich in carbon and hydrogen. Once dried by sun and burnt, such material can generate steam which, in turn, can run external turbines. He said that

old tyres were also a concentrated source of energy because they contain 90 per cent carbon. Once burnt, these tyres can produce enormous quantity of energy, capable of operating an electric station.

Taking part in the workshop, which started Monday, are 60 engineers representing various public and private sector institutions.

Participants in the three-day workshop will discuss working papers dealing with ways to conserve energy in chemical industries as well as a study on the situation of energy in Jordan in terms of energy consumption in the various sectors, Jordan's capability to generate and distribute energy, developing various and alternative energy resources and linking the situation of energy

with the activities of and developments in the industrial and social sectors.

The participants will also discuss the energy policies and management in factories and ways to ration consumption.

The chairman of the Chemical Engineering Department, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Tamimi, delivered an opening address in which he underlined the importance of Jordan's energy security and affirmed the need to ration energy consumption.

He said Jordan, which is an energy importing country, was in dire need to curb its current level of consumption, particularly in view of its lack of important energy resources and because the energy situation is influenced by international and political changes.

Decision on recycling waste water to be implemented

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 1989 government decision on the recycling of treated waste water for irrigation purposes, especially in the production of field crops and vegetables which are eaten cooked, and the production of animal feed, will be put into force immediately.

The move to enforce the decision was taken by the ministers of agriculture, water and irrigation, health and municipal and rural affairs and the environment whose departments are concerned with matters related to water, food production and health.

The 1989 government decision provides for water from the streams, artesian wells and springs, which is not mix with

waste water, to be used freely for irrigation purposes, and for the use of treated water for irrigating vegetables eaten cooked or for irrigating land grown with animal feed.

The decision empowers the ministers of health, water and irrigation and agriculture to assign areas where the treated water can be used.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, a special committee was set up by the four ministers to locate lands for such agricultural production. The committee members drew up specifications for such lands which, they said, is located in the following areas: Zarqa River basin, the lands adjacent to the Wadi Duleil

stream, the Jerash Stream, Wadi Sheib, Bireh, Kufunje, Karak and Al Ghuweir streams.

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Mohammad Al Zaben said that the recycling of treated water could provide a very good source of water for irrigation purposes, but he said that public health safety measures have to be strictly adhered to in the process of water treatment to ensure safe production.

According to Petra, the committee and the four ministers will hold another meeting on May 4 to follow up the implementation of the procedure and to discuss new proposals related to the project.

New cigarette brands to boost sales

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette (JTCC) will shortly put on the markets here and abroad two new brands of cigarettes in a bid to promote the sales and to compete with foreign brands abroad, according to Farid Al Saad, the company's general director.

"The company has completed feasibility studies and taken all the technical measures for the production of the two new types which will be of very high quality

and can compete with any brand abroad," Mr. Saad said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Tuesday.

He said that the step was being taken to improve the quality, on the one hand and to enable the country to earn more revenues from sales, on the other. Mr. Saad declined to disclose the names of the new brands.

"Jordan's main cigarette export markets have been Iraq and the Gulf countries so far, but the

company has now succeeded in opening new markets in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries while continued efforts are being made to open markets in Western Europe," Mr. Saad pointed out.

The cigarette industry earns the Jordanian treasury nearly JD 30 million annually, in duty, because the government's income accounts for 85 per cent of the total value of cigarettes consumed in Jordan, Mr. Saad

noted.

In addition, the company earns the country some JD 14 million in foreign currency, in revenues from selling its cigarettes abroad, and saves the country \$160 million annually by meeting the needs of the local markets of cigarettes and tobacco. Mr. Saad said that the local market consumes up to 175 million packets of cigarettes every year, and the company provides the required amounts.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King condoles Ismail Shureiqi families

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday delegated the assistant chief of protocol to convey his condolences to Ismail family and to the General Union of Jordanian Trade Federations over the death of Mohammad Samih Ismail, chairman of the union's Central Council. The King also delegated the secretary general of the Royal Court to take part in the funeral procession of Shihra Shureiqi and to offer his condolences to Al Shureiqi family and Khair family over her death. Also Tuesday, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, delegated the director of his office to take part in the funeral procession of Shihra Shureiqi, wife of the late Bashir Khair.

Prince Hassan receives Pakistani team

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday received at the Higher Council of Science and Technology a delegation of teachers and students from the Pakistani National Defence College. The Crown Prince discussed with the delegation members the situation in the region and Jordan's principled position vis-a-vis these situations. The meeting was attended by the Pakistani ambassador and the military attache in Amman.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITION

— The International Building Exhibition at the University of Jordan.

LECTURE

— Lecture on architecture by Prof. Dr. Eng. Jan Cajka entitled "Reflections of Personal Experience in the Middle East" at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) — 11:00 a.m.

Jordan Times

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Youth and future

WHEN THE minister of youth admitted in a press interview two days ago that his ministry had failed to cope with the problems faced by Jordan's youth and channel their energy into productive use, he opened a festering wound filled with grievances that should have been tackled a long time ago but were not. For years now, the state has ignored that ministry and dismissed it as just another governmental institution that someone had needlessly created. In the meantime our youth are still roaming the streets aimlessly looking for something to do, wondering how time can be filled productively and usefully. The increasing unemployment rate threatens to exacerbate this big problem and the not-so-healthy economic situation indicates that even less money will be allocated to the needs of our younger generations any time soon. The challenge could not be more foreboding than it is now, especially that the minister had the honesty and courage to speak out and undertake to try solutions for the mess that is called the Ministry of Youth and what can be achieved through it. Football and other types of sports are fine, but on their own they are not the answer. Certainly not when the facilities are lacking, the coaching is primitive and the incentives to excel are almost non-existent. With this in mind, something must be done to change the picture, and a great deal can be learned from the experience of other countries which have done well in this regard. The resources have to be found as well. But this is not everything that can be done for our youth.

Innovative ideas, old and new, have to be debated and implemented. We can start early, at school, where children have to be taught more than arithmetic and language. They have to be prepared for and educated on extracurricular activities that they would carry out as they go through their school years and beyond. In this respect, the Ministry of Education has to be closely associated with and involved in this effort which is dedicated to more than academic work. Other government and private institutions have to be drawn in, to make sure that they do their work first and then to come up with the creative ideas necessary to ensure better interaction with our younger generations. Voluntary work, or the need for it, has to be ingrained in the minds of our youth. They have to be taught the value of it, just as much as their obligation to serve their local communities and the society at large has to be respected. There are ways and means to do this. Authorities could arrange for summer camps which would take the youth to different parts of the Kingdom during their holiday season. This would teach them independence, how to enjoy nature, protect the environment and acquaint them with the different parts and customs in their country. There are other channels for those who might not want to consume their energy into sports or scouting. Theatre, social clubs, libraries, music conservatories are outlets that have to be explored, built, strengthened and institutionalised. Jordan unfortunately has not done enough to instill cultural education and life in the minds of its young citizens. No excuses are acceptable. Nor our difficult political situation, nor our limited resources, nor the stage of our development.

The minister of youth, who doubles as minister of culture also, has done well to come out and exercise self-criticism in the open. If we do not start now, when? The prime minister and the whole government, all sectors of the society in fact, have to help and support him in any solid and positive endeavour or initiative he might make to improve the lot of our youth and their legitimate needs and aspirations.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic Daily Thursday draws attention to Israel's stepped up acts of repression against the Palestinian people of occupied Arab lands, and said the escalation in arbitrary measures can by no means intimidate the Palestinians involved in the uprising, or deter the Palestinians involved in talks with the U.S. Secretary of State over a peaceful settlement. The present escalation of terrorism being exercised on the Palestinians is designed to kill the intifada which came into being in reaction to Israel's atrocities, and the stepped up acts of repression can only mean that Israel is determined to deny the legitimate rights of the Palestinians regardless of the ongoing attempts to end the issue, the paper noted. The paper said that the Israeli leaders seem to be apprehensive about the beginning of the peace process, and so they resorted to further acts of repression, displaying their real feelings of hatred towards the Arabs and the Palestinians. The Israeli aggressors are wrong to believe or imagine that with intimidation and repression, they can deter Palestinian leaders from meeting with James Baker or would force the PLO to retreat from any drive for a solution, the paper noted. The intifada, the paper concluded, would continue unabated, and the Palestinians leaders would pursue all efforts and explore every possible means to find a solution for the Palestine problem.

Which is more precious for Jordan... financial savings or people's lives? Asks a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily Tuesday. Many people are now trying to find out the answer following the occurrences of numerous accidents along the Amman-Queen Alia International Airport highway and the Amman-Zarqa highway, says Ahmad Al Dabbas. It is true that turning off the lights on these roads or part of them is bound to conserve energy for the country, but keeping the roads in darkness is costing the country human life through road accidents that have been increasing lately, says Dabbas. The writer says the loss of human life and the loss of costly vehicles and their spare parts do far greater damage to the country and its economy than saving money by conserving energy and fuel. The energy conservation measures were indeed useful during the war time when each citizen abided by the rules, and helped the country overcome the difficulty of obtaining oil products, says Dabbas, but now crude oil has been in constant supply from more than one source and the writer says there is urgent need for lighting the roads at night so that no more accidents occur and no human life or property is lost.

Economic Forum

Anatomy of unemployment

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

HISTORICALLY, economic policies have had to wrestle with three main problems: Unemployment, inflation and inadequate economic growth. Some of these objectives are mutually exclusive: Economic policy has to target either combating unemployment or curbing inflation. Normally, we have full employment (defined as a situation where the rate of unemployment is less than 5 per cent) coupled with high inflation, or we have price stability alongside unemployment (more than 5 per cent). The seventies and eighties brought about the odd phenomenon of stagflation where unemployment and inflation existed side by side, mainly due to the oil shocks which pushed oil prices skyhigh, thus stifling economic activity (implying less job opportunities) and simultaneously boosting production costs (and thereby the rate of inflation).

One has to remember, however, that the above analysis is read out mainly from the experience of advanced countries and thus the degree of its applicability to developing countries is not well decided yet. But it is obvious that these countries are basically pre-occupied with economic growth as an overwhelming policy priority. Unemployment is an accepted fact of their lives. Inflation is a common place and sometimes it develops into hyper or galloping inflation. Indeed high rates of inflation are the norm rather than the exception in developing countries.

Since 1950, Jordan enjoyed a remarkable, even enviable, price

stability. Its economic growth rate was generally healthy as decisively evidenced by the rise in living standards. But our unemployment record has been starkly different. Very simply, the problem is that the Jordanian economy produces labourers more than jobs. Even if we were able to channel Jordanian labour to all of the jobs occupied by non-Jordanians we would be still short of jobs. This is clear from the fact that the number of Jordanians working abroad, that is labour exports, is more than the number of non-Jordanians employed in Jordan (labour imports).

However, Jordan stepped into the nineties not only with the nasty problem of unemployment but also with the added problem of inflation which was very efficiently triggered by the 1988/89 currency devaluation. Simultaneously, the economic growth rate plunged down and thus Jordan started suddenly to face the three cardinal economic evils: unemployment, inflation and deficient economic growth. Higher taxes added to the mess. No wonder then that Jordan witnesses the social upheaval of the early 1989.

In a lecture he delivered last Sunday in the Association of Banks in Jordan, our friend Dr. Jawad Anani made a very good point when he noticed that the quality of our labour exports is vastly superior to that of our labour imports. He very rightly noticed that this did not, and should not, call for rejoicing as some of us used to do, because we should have saved our highly qualified labourers for our economy to produce some of the "sophisticated" goods and services that we have been importing.

Under the circumstances, we actually import high quality labour which is embodied in such imports of services and goods. What we did in practical terms was as though we lent our skills to the rest of the world which sold us back these skills at a wide margin of profit, thus we imported high quality labour at higher prices.

The exportation of surplus labour was the historical solution which Jordan spontaneously employed to tackle the chronic problem of unemployment. And it worked beautifully. The side effects of the Gulf crisis awakened us to the bitter fact that this solution has its serious shortcomings as it renders Jordan vulnerable to political pressures and reprisals. While there are good reasons to expect that the inflammable passions and emotional reactions of the crisis will give way to the national attitudes, it might be high time to work out indigenous solutions. The first step in this direction is to give high priority to combating unemployment. Under the present circumstances the economic policy of Jordan is not giving priority to anything, not to inflation and not to unemployment. The objective of economic growth is not targeted as well, as there is no specific investment strategy to prop it up. If anything, the only goal of the economic policy presently is to close the budget deficit. This goal is being pursued without addressing its impact on other economic problems. Much worse is the fact that it is being sought through heavy reliance on higher taxes, which means it is being furthered at their expense.

Kurdish refugee crisis provokes anxiety in Turkey

By Alistair Lyon
Reuter

ANKARA — For Turkey, allergic to Kurdish claims to a separate identity, the plight of half a million Kurds stranded on its border evokes mixed pity and apprehension.

Ordinary Turks, like television viewers around the world, have been horrified at the tide of human misery washing over the mountains from Iraq. Many have dug into their pockets in response to a Turkish Red Crescent appeal.

"It's a big tragedy for the Kurds — God save all from such a fate — but why should we have to carry this burden? It's the Turkish taxpayers' money being spent on them and we don't have much to spare," said Ahmet Demir, an Ankara tax driver.

The government, spending \$870,000 a day on relief, has made very clear that the hundreds of thousands of mainly Kurdish refugees are unwelcome on Turkish soil.

Leftwing Kurdish guerrillas have fought a seven year campaign for independence for Turkey's 10 million Kurds.

Some 3,000 people have died in the struggle with the Marxist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and helped to poison relations between the central government and the mainly Kurdish south-east.

On the bleak hillside of the Iraqi-Turkish border, Turkish troops have penned the fleeing Iraqi Kurds in squalid camps, letting only a few thousand trickle down to the valleys.

Western diplomats say only 50,000 to 100,000 refugees are on the Turkish side of the ill-defined frontier.

Ankara, determined not to end up harbouring huge numbers of embittered Kurdish refugees, has argued all along that the world community must acknowledge responsibility for their misery.

Turkey is still reluctant host to 27,000 Iraqi Kurds who fled across the border from President Saddam Hussein's gas attacks in 1988. Western countries have accepted only a handful.

In a telephone call last week, President Turgut Ozal urged U.S. President George Bush to accept his idea of setting up U.N.-supervised refugee sanctuaries inside Iraq.

Bush, under growing pressure to reverse his policy of keeping U.S. troops out of northern Iraq, on Tuesday announced plans to send them in to create safety zones for refugees.

American forces, leading a huge allied relief operation, began setting up refugee camps across the Turkish border in Iraq this weekend.

The sight of Western armies organising the return of the Kurds, if not to their homes, at least to camps outside Turkish territory, alleviates Turkey's main immediate worry.

Turkey is unlikely to be patient with Kurds who resist the idea of repatriation under the protection of allied guns.

For Ankara, concern remains that if Saddam stays in power the fearful Kurds may get no nearer their homes than the tent cities rising a stone's throw from the border.

If the camps prove more than temporary, they could turn into fertile recruiting grounds for Kurdish guerrillas in southeast Turkey seeking independence, just as the frustration of life in refugee camps on Israel's borders has fuelled Palestinian nationalism

for the past four decades.

Turkey, unlike Iraq, has never offered autonomy to the Kurds, saying they have the same rights as other Turks and are not a separate ethnic minority deserving special treatment.

The government has long argued that the solution to the unrest lies in improving social and economic conditions in the impoverished southeast, combined with tough security measures.

Kurdish foes of the government say people in the southeast suffer discrimination and harsh treatment by security forces, who use mass detentions and torture in their pursuit of the PKK.

Turkey's policies towards the Kurds are a frequent target of Western criticism, which is bitterly resented in Ankara.

Ozal, whose vision often seems at odds with mainstream opinion in his own government and army, has recently sought to project a different image of Turkey's relations with Kurds.

Foreseeing that the aftermath of the Gulf war would thrust the plight of Kurds into the international limelight, he tried to clean up Turkey's record by lifting a law under which Kurds could be



Turkish soldiers fired into the air when these refugees tried to launch their home-made raft across the river separating Iraq from Turkey.

prosecuted for speaking their own tongue.

Opponents within his own ruling Motherland Party held up the change in parliament, but Ozal finally rammed it through last week under a law which also provides for the early release of most of Turkey's 46,000 prisoners, including Kurdish activists.

The new language law alters little in practice — Kurdish re-

mains banned from schools, publications and official use.

Many Turks were shocked when Ozal invited Iraqi Kurdish rebel leaders to Ankara for talks in March and endorsed their demand for autonomy within a democratic Iraq.

Ozal's nationalist critics worry that his overtures to the Iraqi Kurds could stimulate similar demands from Turkish Kurds.

Hoops, helicopters, mountain-men and the camel's feet

By Rami G. Khouri

WE HAVE LIVED this moment at least once before, somehow walked this terrain and scanned this misty political horizon: the American secretary of state travels around the Middle East seeking to prod Arab-Israeli negotiations, the United States provides Israel with hundreds of millions of dollars in extra aid just as Israel speeds up its colonisation of the occupied territories, we applaud the American president as he declares that negotiations must be based on the principle of exchanging land-for-peace, but hear the Israeli prime minister refuse this principle outright, the Arabs demand rights and justice, the British can't figure out if this is the 19th century when they can be callous imperialists or the 20th century when they can be neo-imperialists, the Europeans waltz, the Kurds are once again used as a pawn in the hands of Western colonial powers, everyone searches in agony and vain for the United Nations, and the Palestinians jump up and down in the background, frantically trying to get into the picture, and yelling out "hey, fellas, here we are, we're over here!"

It's a peculiar landscape which dominates the Holy Land this month. Some things have changed, but many things have not. We have had another war, but it's still not clear who won. The winners of the military battle are waving flags and yellow ribbons, but deep down there is something not quite right about their celebration. They are pleased to have exorcised the ghosts of Vietnam, to feel good once again about themselves as Americans — but the lands of Shites and Kurds and Palestinians are not Vietnam, not even Arkansas. This is the Middle East, and feeling good around here has more to do with making it through each decade without being killed in a war or by your own government, and with burying your parents somewhere near their home, than it does with the depravities of cheering death, and then asking the killers to run for public office.

Something does not feel right about this latest war, because it was not your usual Holy Land brawl. Its epic proportions lacked heroism, and its characters lacked realism. The victims were rarely seen, the victors were obviously lost in the political landscape, motivated more by a desire to return home than by an appreciation for the task at hand. This was a battle for Vietnam and Arkansas, whose unfortunate victims happened to be Arabs. It was clearly not a big screen extravaganza, but a small screen home entertainment special.

The winners somehow are not acting with the composure that accompanies genuine victory; the losers are not showing the contrition that should follow a grievous defeat, or failed policies. We need to wait a bit more to see the real dimensions of the outcome, to discern the real faces of the victors and the losers. This is an ancient land, peopled by old communities who know themselves and their enemies, who understand raising sheep and goat better than they understand engaging in turkey-shoots, who feel more comfortable pulling their food from the ground than catching it from helicopters. Yet, in this ancient land inhabited by stubborn men who will not give up their old ways, there are some intriguing new elements, and some strange new phenomena:

1) Kuwait has provided the Arab World and all humankind with two new attributes of statehood which nobody else in the world has ever before achieved, or even imagined possible. First, because during the seven months of its occupation Kuwait had enough money invested abroad to finance the government, public corporations and most of its nationals living in exile, it became the world's first totally mobile, fully transportable country, impervious to the dictates of geography and immune to the nagging constraints of land and frontiers. Second, it is the only country I know of in the history of the world that was literally set on fire. Much of the

landscape of Kuwait is ablaze today, but beneath the heat and the anger is an awkward reality: The Americans largely built the oil wells in the first place. American actions caused the fires to be ignited, American companies are now making lots of money extinguishing the fires, and American companies will make lots of money rebuilding the oil facilities.

Kuwait is free, but awkwardly fiery, and its smoke was clearly visible last week to the astronauts on the American space shuttle. If anybody else up there is looking down on earth, they must be wondering: What happened to bring about the burning of an entire country? What excesses of humanity or politics occurred in the Middle East that were so grave that they resulted in one Arab country burning another? And why did the world's first fully transportable and flammable country happened to be a small Arab country, created in the first decades of the 20th century by the British in order to secure control of the route to imperial India, and liberated in the last decades of the 20th century by the Americans in order to assure control of the keys to the cash register?

2) The three great colonial and/or imperial powers of the 20th century — Britain, France and the United States — are sending their soldiers into Iraq in order to provide safe havens for millions of Kurdish refugees, temporarily disregarding the niceties of national sovereignty. The refugees escaped Iraq because, they say — golly gee, Wally, I heard them say it on American and British television, so it must be true — they feared for their lives if they stayed in Iraq, and so they did what people in the Middle East have done for thousands of years — they went up the mountain, escaped north, fled to safer terrain in the high country.

But this time, the voyage to safety was not so simple, the old trails did not lead to where the grandparents said they would. Neighbouring Middle Eastern countries did not want a few million permanent refugees. Of course, many of the Kurds would be delighted to stroll along the Champs Elysees and eat snails fried in garlic butter, drive taxis in Houston, or sell yarn and Diet Pepsi to middle-aged English ladies who always get a special kick out of helping dark-skinned recent immigrants to live in the centre of the imperial heartland. But those options were not available to the Kurds in 1990.

The Kurds had missed out in the statehood sweepstakes earlier this century, as did the Americans and Palestinians. In this game, you only get one chance to get your country, and then only if this happens to coincide with the strategic interests of the imperial powers of the west. So, in 1990, the Kurds turned to Washington and London for help once more, and all they got were tears. Sorry, no immigrant visas this year. Try next century. Or wait for the next millennium, it's only nine years away. So, the Kurds — millions of them — continue to roam the mountains, and they must wonder: how did it happen that where once they looked up to the sky for guidance from God, now they look up to the sky for cookies from the American air force?

3) — Having spent tens of billions of dollars of their own money and committed half a million of their own troops, the Americans now assume — at least anticipate favourably — that they have forged a new alliance of Arabs so grateful to America that they are prepared to go along with almost anything Washington proposes vis-a-vis Arab-Israeli peace talks. Americans hold up a hoop, and ask the Arabs to jump through it, so that the audience can clap. But this is not how the world works. These are not the ways of mountain people, or desert dwellers, or farmers in the highlands and valleys of the Holy Land. We are too old for brass promises, too experienced in the ways of the mountain to be fooled by a fleeting flash of sunlight.

The Arabs do not jump through the hoop which the Americans hold up against the reflection of a destroyed and humiliated Iraq. Instead, the Arabs see the sad counter-reflection of Kuwait ablaze. The Arabs do not jump through the hoop, but ask pertinent questions of the circus-master. Why is this hoop held here? Where do we go after we make it through the hoop? Who gave you the hoop in the first place? The Arabs in turn hold up a mirror to the visitor from America to ponder, in its corner a glimpse is visible of the terrible fires of Kuwait. The meaning is clear to the men in the mountains, and can even be seen and appreciated in space. Should it be so hard for men on earth to get the message? The Arabs suggest: Let us learn from the mirror together for a moment, before we get back to the business of the hoop.

The Orient is a dark and dangerous place for young Westerners to wander without accurate maps that can teach them about where to go to find water, how to tread softly on the way, where to offer money, where to offer dignity, with whom to talk seriously, and with whom to talk frivolously. Those who come here from the West in search of fame will only find it if they learn the ways of the camel, this extraordinary ship of the desert, with big, fat, ugly feet — supported on veritable cushions made by the hand of God himself. The Middle East does not work like a microwave oven. Arabia is not Arkansas.

4) Last month, we heard about making peace on the principle of "land-for-peace," and we liked what we heard. We said to ourselves, the cowboys have started climbing from the flat, open plains to the winding mountain trails. They have started to see the real world, the brash young men are learning. But we have not heard much about land-for-peace in recent weeks. Now, we hear proposals for "regional conferences," as if this were a boy scout jamboree regional sub-meeting before the big national bar-b-que leading to the international convention, where a lady dressed as a bald eagle jumps out of a cake grasping a picture of Richard Nixon, and whispers in your ear ("psssssst, hey, you, camel jockey, wanna buy a slightly used doctrine?"); "two-track approaches," as if this were a razor blade commercial, where you make the same old faulty blade but split it into two sections, repackage it with a fancy, slightly high-tech name, hire a slick advertising agency, and offer it to an unsuspecting public as if it must be good because it sounds new and it's made in America; and "confidence-building measures," as if we were a bunch of toddlers who needed to generate confidence before we can stand on our feet and go out to explore the world, rather than being what we are — seasoned old mountain trekkers, Middle Easterners with feet and characters like camels, hilltop men and women who have wandered the ancient landscape for thousands of years, looking down to the earth for identity, up to the sky for strength, and always, always conscious of what our grandmothers told us about never trusting the British, and about suspecting neatly dressed men from across the oceans who show up on our doorstep every few years, with big plans in one hand, and hoops in the other, and helicopter magazines in their back pockets.

The moment is young, but still promising. We will soon learn about what is possible, and what is necessary, for peace to reign in the Holy Land. The first signs are intriguing, worthy of further examination. The mirror will get much use, which is necessary if the bravado of youth is to give way to the realism of middle age, and the wisdom of the elderly. Never have we seen the young lads from the west move so quickly, or so often, or carry so many hoops. But then again, never have we had an entire country on fire, East within only months. Never has the mountain been so crowded.

Post-apartheid reality unsettles S. African liberals

By Anton Ferreira

Reuters

JOHANNESBURG — After years of campaigning to end apartheid, many white liberals find the reality of the new South Africa falls well short of their dreams.

As crime rates soar along with township violence, the liberal and not-so liberal are again asking the eternal South African question: Should I head for California or Australia?

Heart Surgeon Christian Barnard, who performed the world's first human heart transplant in Cape Town in 1967, declared earlier this month he was considering emigration.

"I don't want to live in a Lebanon situation, I want to prevent myself and my family from becoming victims of violence," said Barnard, who two years ago announced support for the anti-apartheid Democratic Party.

"I always believed that one day we would get rid of apartheid, but I felt the transformation would be more peaceful," he said.

The surgeon later told reporters he felt more positive about the future after a talk with reformist President F.W. de Klerk who had assured him the government was doing all it could to end township violence.

But Dennis Beckett, editor of the current affairs magazine Frontline and a radio talk-show host, said Barnard's initial pessimism was widely shared.

"Every second bloke you speak to says the same thing — it's become a cliché."

A conversation with Durban-based consultant Jenny Wild was typical. "I'm disappointed at the new South Africa... The political turmoil will make investors go to Eastern Europe instead."

She also expressed concern at crime. "I have a gun, dogs, everything. If you'd told me three years ago I'd be carrying a gun, I'd have laughed at you."

Wild said she would leave South Africa if she thought her children's lives were in danger. "Why should I let my genes be wiped out?"

Beckett said he had also begun to question whether he would stay in South Africa.

"I can see the possibility of the country descending into a cycle of violence that would be intolerable."

In South Africa, someone is murdered every 45 minutes, a serious assault occurs every four minutes, a robbery every 10 minutes, a break-in every three minutes.

Political violence has killed nearly 10,000 people since 1984. Of those, more than 1,200 have died in the Johannesburg area alone since last August. Unemployment is around 40 per cent.

Township violence used to mean police shooting black demonstrators, and many South African liberals assumed this would end with apartheid. The country would return to international respectability, foreign investment would flow in and almost everyone would live happily ever after, they thought.

But although de Klerk dismantling apartheid early last year, the township death toll still mounts — partly because of police action, but mainly in battles between rival black groups. "A lot of people are obviously concerned at the violence and the negotiations (between the government and black opposition groups) have not seemed to make much progress," said one of South Africa's foremost liberals, former Member of Parliament Helen Suzman.

"But that's no reason to give up hope, although I'm not as optimistic as I was at the start of last year." Suzman, who was for many years the only anti-apartheid activist in parliament, said she was staying out. "I haven't worked all these years just to quit now."

She said South Africa had a bright future if a solution could be found to political violence. Barnard's public pessimism over the new South Africa brought a flood of reaction.

A caller to a radio talk show, who identified herself as a supporter of the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, said, "I'm going to stay, because it's my country. What I can't understand is, why do people like Chris Barnard want to leave when this is the future they voted for?"

The right-wing Citizen newspaper said people like Barnard were disillusioned because they had expected "quite foolishly" that the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of his African National Congress "would be the start of a peaceful process of change."

Despite the gloom, more people immigrated to South Africa last year than left. The department of home affairs reported a net gain of 9,777 people, 54 per cent up on 1989.

Baker in Damascus

(Continued from page 1)

tions or the European Community and how Palestinians would be represented at the talks.

Syria, fearing a regional conference might play down United Nations resolutions ordering Israel quit occupied Arab territories, wants Washington to have a leading role in any conference.

Syria's official newspapers said Tuesday that Israel was the only obstacle to peace. They urged Washington to take steps to force the Jewish state to withdraw from the occupied territories to settle the conflict.

Estimates of the total amount of oil released into the Gulf have varied widely from half a million to over 12 million barrels. The public, having expressed its deep-felt horror at the death of large numbers of cormorants, regarded by many as symbols of the innocent victims of the war, breathed a collective sigh of relief when

American-Iraqi tension mounts

(Continued from page 1)

from a peak of 540,000. More than 300,000 troops, or nearly 60 per cent, have been withdrawn since the end of the Gulf war Feb. 28.

Britain is sending a regiment of light artillery to the border of Iraq and Turkey to boost protection for Kurdish camps, British defence sources said.

The unit, due to leave shortly, is part of the 3rd commando brigade of some 4,500 men which forms the bulk of the British military presence in the region.

As part of a stepped-up U.S. relief effort, U.S. troops were arriving with more aid at the worst-off border refugee camps, at Cukura and Uzunlu.

The office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said Tuesday that a U.N. team would go to Iraq to launch an aid effort

for any refugees returning from Turkey and Iran. The 10 to 15 relief experts would be the first group to go to Iraq under terms of an aid agreement signed by the United Nations and Iraq last week.

An estimated 850,000 Kurds from northern Iraq fled to mountains along the Turkish border after a failed rebellion following the Gulf war, and Turkey and the United States hope to persuade them to move to camps being set up under allied protection in northern Iraq.

An additional 1.5 million Kurds sought refuge in the mountains along the Iran-Iraq border. Shiite Muslims, who rebelled in southern Iraq, also fled into Iran, and Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency said Tuesday that newly arrived refugees report that Shiite rebels continue to clash nightly with troops in southern cities.

PLO wants U.N. 'presence'

(Continued from page 1)

"One must be vigilant at each step in the minefield... the American plans must be faced... pressures will be exercised on the PLO, which requires intelligence and flexibility," Mr. Arafat said in an opening speech reported by the Palestinian news agency Wafa.

"The PLO will not let the United States, Israel or anyone designate our delegation (to a peace conference), or impose internal autonomy as a new kind of slavery for our people," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Arafat added that Jerusalem was "the essential prob-

lem" in diplomatic moves by the U.S. secretary of state.

Saudi Arabia said Monday it continued to support the setting up of an independent Palestinian state, including Arab Jerusalem, despite its anger over the PLO's pro-Iraq sympathies.

"Saudi Arabia... has never retracted from a position it has taken or deviated from a policy it has declared because all moves are accurately calculated," the state-run Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said in a commentary.

The commentary followed an earlier government statement supporting efforts by Mr. Baker, who held two days of talks with Saudi leaders.



The ecological disaster in the Gulf

By Peter Vine

GIVEN the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that some confusion has arisen over the extent of the pollution unleashed on the northern Gulf and surrounding countries. But this is one instance where the world press cannot be blamed for producing conflicting reports on the size of the oil spill or its latest position.

Part of the problem lies with the difficulties encountered in identifying thin sheens of floating oil in a military zone unsafe for research vessels or surveillance aircraft. While satellites have been of considerable use in tracking smoke from burning oil wells and storage tanks, there have been major hitches with the interpretation of satellite images of the sea's surface: apparently leading in some cases to extensive sea-grass or algal beds in shallow water being tagged as dark oil slicks. Changes in sea conditions, as well as altering clarity of the water, have resulted in these phantom slick appearing one day and disappearing the next. This has not helped the process of assessing the overall extent of the slick or contingency planning by countries in the firing line of this environmental terror.

The size of the slick

Estimates of the total amount of oil released into the Gulf have varied widely from half a million to over 12 million barrels. The public, having expressed its deep-felt horror at the death of large numbers of cormorants, regarded by many as symbols of the innocent victims of the war, breathed a collective sigh of relief when

they were told that the slick was not as large as previously estimated. Other sources contradicted these comments, however, pointing to the fact that a great deal of oil was still floating off shore and had not yet affected the coastline.

A remarkable feature of the entire period since the oil first poured into the Gulf is that almost all officials have been ready to express opinions regarding the quantity of oil released into the sea, but very few have been able to support their statements with anything remotely approaching scientific evidence. Suggestions that deliberate misinformation was fed into the rumour machine during the height of the conflict cannot be verified. Given the genuine confusion among scientists as to what did or did not constitute an oil slick, one could forgive military and political spokesmen for the odd error.

One of the first official reports of these disastrous events was in the form of a cable from U.S. military sources, dated Jan. 29, addressed to the OECD meeting of environment ministers in Paris. It confirmed the statement by General Schwarzkopf at his briefing in Riyadh on Jan. 27 in which he announced that the major spill emanated from Mina Al Ahmadi. The report further states that the first source was from five ships located at the terminals, which had been riding low in the water "apparently fully loaded," but were then "riding very high, an indication that their cargo, 4 million barrels of crude oil, has been emptied." The report explained that the "second source of the slick was

the oil released from the tank farms on the mainland; this added another 4-5 million barrels of crude to the slick. The valves controlling this flow of oil are in Iraqi hands."

Denying Saddam Hussein's accusations that U.S. military action was responsible, the report states: "The slick has nothing to do with U.S. military activities. There have been none in the area. In fact the existence of the growing slick was not known to us until Jan. 24, probably four days after the valves had been opened by the Iraqis. We notified the Saudi government as soon as we discovered what the Iraqis had done and immediately began consulting with experts from Saudi Arabia about how to handle this environmental disaster." Finally the cable explains that there is "another slick which has touched the shore and is responsible for killing birds and animals. This is the slick seen on television. It is much smaller and was created in the first two days of the war as a result of Iraqi shelling that hit the Khafji refinery."

On Tuesday Jan. 29, a new source of crude flowing into the Gulf was identified at Mina Al Bakr super tanker terminal on the Fao peninsula in Iraq. Three days later that flow was reported to have ceased. Whilst the major flows were stemmed, in the case of Al Ahmadi by an F-111 aircraft delivering "smart" GBU-15 guided bombs directly onto a crucial valve, smaller sources from Iraq and Kuwait have continued to spew crude into the sea right up to the present time.

The U.S. Coast Guard, deal-

ing with the slick from their temporary operational base in eastern Saudi Arabia, have repeatedly stated that they are only concerned with the oil which has been gradually making its way down the Saudi Arabian coastline. Their most recent estimate of the size of that coastal slick is 4 million barrels. Sophisticated computer models employed to predict movements of the oil have been reasonably accurate with regard to this slick and many of the apparent anomalies based on satellite tracking may be more related to misreading of satellite images than shortcomings in the computer programmes.

"Ecocide"

One reason for the great interest in the amount of crude oil released into the Gulf is that it has been widely described as the world's largest oil-slick. Suggestions that it might not deserve this title appear to have created disappointment in some quarters. Concern for the actual extent of damage caused to wildlife seems at times to have been clouded by the more sensational aspect of the story. Having recently walked the oil soaked beaches of Saudi Arabia and watched many birds dying from the oil, there is no doubt in my mind that this is one of the world's worst cases of ecocide. Assuming the total amount of oil released into the Gulf to be only 5 million barrels, the slick would still qualify as the worst ever, about 220 times the size of the Exxon Valdez Alaskan spill of 1989 and considerably larger than the Ixtoc I from which 3.3 million barrels spilt into the

Gulf of Mexico in 1979.

One statistics which clearly contradicts the suggestion that the spill may have been much less than this, and possibly as "little" as the Exxon Valdez, which was reported to have released a "mere" quarter of a million barrels, is provided by the official figures for oil recovered into Saudi Aramco facilities: As of March 25 the figure for total recovery of crude oil was 361,765 barrels. The oil which has come ashore is naturally accumulating in bays between Tanajib and Abu Ali and purpose built sandbars are helping to hold it in thick masses from which skimmers pull it into pits on shore before it is pumped into trucks and carried away for refining. Daily recovery rates are presently running at around 15,000 to 20,000 barrels per day and there is no sign yet of any shortage of oil to pump from the sea.

The extent of the disaster

It is on this basis that I believe the recent Gulf war did indeed unleash the world's largest oil slick upon this shallow and highly productive sea. Damage caused by the slick is ongoing and is still under assessment. Countless birds, many turtles, sea-snakes and other forms of marine life have been killed by the oil. One does not need to be a marine biologist or ornithologist to appreciate the scale of this disaster: evidence is all too obvious along the shores of Kuwait and northern Saudi Arabia. When I dived under-

neath the oil slick off Ras Al Zaur in February, just before the short-lived land-war began, I was impressed by the thickness of the oil, the fact that it totally cut out the light, and that nothing seemed to escape its poisonous, sticky tentacles. It was a strange sensation, in less than eight feet of water, to find oneself swimming in pitch darkness in the middle of the day. To make matters worse the sky above was almost as black as the sea.

There can be little doubt that the mega-slick in the Gulf is an environmental disaster of enormous proportions, nor that the setting alight of most of Kuwait's oil wells is an even greater catastrophe. In the months ahead we shall see just how lethal the combination of oil and smoke is for Man and nature. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait provide an unexpected testing ground for the West's military muscle; now it is proving an equally challenging battlefield for environmental science and technology.

I shall be returning to the Gulf shortly to search for elusive dugongs, and to discover whether turtles and terns have managed to survive the oil in order to nest on islands off the Saudi coastline. Arabia's wildlife has already suffered from the impact of massive regional development: one cannot but hope that the great surge in public awareness and concern for the Gulf's natural environment, stimulated by this ecological disaster, will not have come too late for the animals themselves.

Dr. Vine is a marine biologist and formerly director of fisheries research in Saudi Arabia. He has recently returned from the Gulf. This article is reprinted from Middle East International.

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EC to raise financial aid to Tunisia

TUNIS (R) — The European Community (EC) will increase its financial aid to Tunisia by 27 per cent to 284 million European Currency Units (ECUs) (\$240 million) in the next five years, the EC office in Tunis said Monday.

Of the total, 116 million ECUs (\$98 million) will be gifts. The remaining 168 millions (\$142 million) will be lent by the European Investment Bank at interest rates close to those of the World Bank.

A feature of the aid package will be that 15 million ECUs (\$12.7 million) of the gifts will be earmarked for risk capital of finance Tunisian participation in joint ventures.

In the previous package for the five-year period ending in 1991 the EC provided Tunisia with 224 million ECUs (\$184 million).

EC sources said Tunisia could obtain additional aid in the form of support for structural adjustment programmes open to seven Arab countries, or from the Community's regional cooperation fund available to all Mediterranean countries.

Iran central bank said seeking large oil credits

PARIS (R) — The Iranian central bank, Bank Markazi, has approached European banks to raise \$1 to \$2 billion in loans repayable from oil sales by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), according to oil industry journal Petrostrategies. Monday's edition of the Paris-based weekly said lenders would open credit lines for buyers of Iranian crude oil and take 50 per cent of the value of their purchases in repayment of the loans, passing the remaining 50 per cent on to NIOC.

Saudi firms approach banks for large loans

RIYADH (R) — Saudi Arabia, hit by huge Gulf war costs, has given public sector companies the green light to borrow large sums from commercial banks for expansion projects, bankers and economists said Monday.

State-owned giants like oil firm Saudi Aramco and petrochemical conglomerate Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) have already tapped kingdom banks for cash and many more are expected to follow suit in the second half of the year, they said.

Previously, those firms were able to obtain soft loans from government credit institutions like the Public Investment Fund and Saudi Industrial Development Fund.

Saudi Arabia decided in 1989 to stop allocating new money to those funds, which means they can now lend only by recycling the returns from previous loans.

This policy decision — aimed at limiting reliance on state spending and cutting budget deficits — came home to roost when Gulf war bills swallowed up the kingdom's oil revenues and the peacetime business climate picked up, economists said.

"Basically, they (the government) are saying to the companies if you can find the money you can get the deal and we'll give you the go-ahead," a Western economist in Riyadh said. "It's a very unusual development."

Economists say Saudi Arabia, burdened with up to \$65 billion of war-related costs, saw its budget

deficit swell to \$15 or 16 billion in 1990 from a projected \$6.6 billion.

It is expected to double in 1991 but narrow again in 1992 as final bills are paid and oil production increases.

Foreign banks have agreed to participate in a sovereign loan of at least \$3.5 billion for Saudi Arabia but signing is believed to still be weeks away.

Saudi banks, which were excluded from that deal, are flush with funds and domestic loans form only a small portion of their assets.

Bankers say Aramco approached each of the kingdom's domestic banks during the last few months for as much money as they were willing to provide in one-year loans to help cover the cost of boosting its oil production.

Economists say Aramco spent almost \$2 billion raising its output by more than 50 per cent to help compensate world markets for the loss of Kuwaiti and Iraqi crude.

Terms and amounts varied for each bank but the bankers said Aramco might seek a formal syndicated loan if it pushed ahead with plans to raise capacity further to ten million barrels per day (b/d) from around 8.5 million at present.

"They need a very large amount of money not provided by the regular cash flow," one banker said.

Bankers said SABIC, which is building a new petrochemical

plant with Japan's Mitsui Engineering and Shipbuilding Company, had also borrowed money in the past few weeks.

Another government-controlled firm, SCECO (Saudi Consolidated Electrical Companies) Western was negotiating a 1.2 billion riyal loan (\$450 million) with Saudi Banks, they said. The deal was expected to be signed in two weeks' time.

"Basically, the borrowing trend was there but now suddenly there is much more of it — it's being stepped up," one general manager of a Saudi joint-venture bank said.

"He anticipates that plenty more of these companies will come to the market for loans in the second half of the year," he added.

The companies which have approached banks so far have strong balance sheets, a huge income, and could basically borrow as much they need, bankers and economists say.

New business opportunities were clearly opening up as projects delayed by the war were taken off ice and local industries geared up for a share of Kuwaiti reconstruction.

"People are exhilarated by the way the war ended — so quickly and with so little damage to Saudi Arabia's infrastructure," one economist said.

"The government may be broke but the gloomy business investment climate we saw before the war has reversed itself," he added.

Turkish company offers labour for mass housing in eastern Germany

ISTANBUL (R) — A state-owned Turkish bank, has offered to build mass housing in eastern Germany using cheaper Turkish labour to cut costs, a senior bank official said Monday.

"We can halve house prices if cheaper Turkish labour is approved," said Engin Civan,

general manager of Turkiye Emlak Bankasi A.S.

Bank officials said the offer by the bank's contracting arm Emlak Konut had been welcomed by the German government.

The officials said their offer was a general one and it was too early to give details as to the size and value of possible projects.

Emlak Konut already has a 10 per cent share in a German-financed consortium for a 4,000-unit housing project in the Soviet Union worth three billion marks (\$1.7 billion), the first stage of a deal worth 9.5 billion marks (\$5.4 billion).

Job ads hit lowest level in U.S. in about 8 years

NEW YORK (AP) — A widely followed survey of job advertising in February fell to the lowest level in nearly eight years, suggesting the labour market downturn will persist despite signs the recession is ending, economists said.

The help-wanted advertising index, a measurement of the volume of employment ads in newspapers nationwide, fell to 96, down from 100 in February and 142 in February 1990.

That put the index at the lowest level since a July 1983 reading of 97, said the Conference Board, the New York-based business research group that compiles the survey.

"We've got a decline that runs literally across the country," said Kenneth Goldstein, a Conference Board economist.

Despite some indications the recession is nearing an end, cutbacks by retailing, real estate and

financial companies indicate the decline in job advertising will continue, though at a slower pace, Goldstein said.

Such cutbacks, including layoffs and belt-tightening, are a result of over expansion during the 1980s boom, he said.

"They realise that when the economy comes back it won't be enough to keep all those people, all those stores, and so on," Goldstein said.

The Conference Board's help-wanted advertising index is considered a sensitive barometer of the economy's overall direction, since it indicates employer demand for a wide variety of jobs.

The index has been in a steady decline since December 1989, when the index stood at 149. By comparison, the index fell to 75 during September and October of 1982, when the country also was in a recession.

Economist prescribes higher unemployment to save Jordan future

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Unemployment is an entrenched problem in the structure of the Jordanian society and the tragedy is that in order to really solve the crisis, Jordanians must suffer from higher unemployment, Dr. Jawad Anani told a forum of bankers, government officials and intellectuals on Sunday evening.

Speaking at the Association of Banks in Jordan, Dr. Anani said Jordan was currently faced with the dilemma of how to utilise best the available and limited resources of the Kingdom.

He mentioned various economic hindrances, but highlighted as most important the crippled labour market, mainly because of the extremely high government employment which, he noted, directly or indirectly hires about 55 per cent of the country's total labour force.

"Can the government bear this burden?" Dr. Anani asked, forecasting a diminished private sector management role in the economy in the future if the answer was positive.

He further wondered how the government could keep on paying the huge salaries and still continue to improve the social and economic welfare of the citizens when the middle class, who comprises mostly government employees, was gradually decreasing in size under the pressures of unemployment and inflation.

"Can't the private sector adopt a role where it can reap the fruits of its own free decisions in exchange for new economic policies in Jordan?" Dr. Anani asked

again.

The former minister of labour and of industry and trade said the Kingdom must revolutionise its economic philosophy because Jordan needed to create about 36,000 job opportunities this year and about 50,000 every year thereafter, taking into consideration the rapid increase in population, which will raise to over five million by the year 2000.

Dr. Anani calculated the need of about JD 1 million in investments a year to achieve a balance between the increase in labour force and the required capital formation.

Calling for a reevaluation of many institutions which have excess staff, Dr. Anani gave a pertinent example of a ministry he headed years ago. "The Ministry of Industry and Trade employs 380 people," he said "when it can function with only 45 and give them half the salary of the 380."

Citing the phosphate company as another example of overstaffing, Dr. Anani questioned the willingness to correct Jordan's economic course and the ability to create true job opportunities. But then, he asked, who can take the "political decision" in this regard?

He mentioned that by transferring the employment burden from the public sector to the private sector the country would greatly depend on productivity. As such, there would be higher requirements for labour productivity and needs to create the environment to achieve that purpose and justify wages in return.

Dr. Anani referred to the economic adjustment programme and noted that the end result of

currency management float, balance of payments strength, reduction in financial aid and improvement of government budget could be summarised in employment selection where nobody would get a job unless needed and where the pay corresponded to the productivity.

This process would entail a higher jobless rates, he pointed out.

This unusual frankness took even a sharper turn when the lecturer said: "It is high time to say that the values we've set up for ourselves during the oil boom years have ended. The years of cheap money have ended."

Economically speaking, Dr. Anani used the World Bank term "Dutch disease syndrome" and said that this disease, whereby people rely on a specific sector for money or rely on the local market instead of tradable commodities for exports to earn money, has ended too.

The lecturer said that the oil boom years created deficiencies in the financial sector and in the private sector at least to a level equal to that in the public sector, but, he noted, at that time governments were able to cover their own failures and the failures of the private sector as well.

The boom years have yielded unqualification at all levels and on top of that an overemployment through the importation of unskilled labourers while exporting at the same time qualified manpower, the former minister pointed out adding that "we were creating job opportunities abroad in every item we were importing then."

Dr. Anani stressed the need to



Jawad Anani
"revolutionise" the economic thinking in Jordan because Jordanians cannot maintain the "money illusion" image.

He said there was no way to escape the modern theory of "competitive edge" of a country to be a part of the international economy and not only on the regional level.

He defended his argument by saying that recent developments have further distanced Arab economic relations and notably Jordan which had no choice but to adjust to developments.

Dr. Anani went a step ahead to affirm that Jordan's being accepted by Arab countries would be more welcomed through international markets than by approaching the same Arab countries directly.

He dismissed that the Gulf crisis had a negative effect on the labour market in Jordan, but quite on the contrary, he saw a positive impact, especially if Iraq were permitted to export again and the political status remained unchanged.

"Jordanians should face realities unemotionally and should realise that the Kingdom possesses unutilised human qualifications that only need a new economic environment where new job areas can be created," Dr. Anani concluded.

Iraqi Airways to fly again next month

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraqi Airways plans next month to resume domestic flights that were grounded by the Gulf war, the official Iraqi News Agency has reported.

The airline's director-general, Nureddine Al Safi, was quoted as saying the company was taking steps to resume flights within the country.

Safi said there would be six flights daily between Baghdad and the southern port city of Basra and four daily between Baghdad and Mosul in the north.

GCC ministers approve multi-billion dollar fund

RIYADH (R) — Six Gulf Arab states agreed Monday night to set up a multi-billion dollar fund which they hope will help promote stability in the region.

The agreement was reached at the first meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) since the Gulf war ended more than seven weeks ago.

"The programme of the GCC to boost development efforts in the Arab countries will be ready to operate in the near future," Saudi Arabian Finance Minister Mohammad Abal Khail said, according to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

Speaking after talks with his counterparts from Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, he said the

fund would have an eventual capital of up to \$15 billion.

GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Bishara said the six finance ministers had defined the fund's objectives and work methods. He gave no further details.

SPA quoted Abal Khail as saying the fund would be managed by a committee of heads of Arab development funds.

Officials earlier said the six

states, which own more than 40 per cent of the world's oil reserves, would no longer lend their petrodollars without guarantees that the money would be used wisely.

"We will take a new look at the relationship between the GCC and other Arab countries," Abdullah Al Qowzei, the GCC's assistant secretary-general for economic affairs, said.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES			
Tuesday, April 23, 1991			
Central Bank official rates			
	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	683.0	687.0	
Pound Sterling	1162.0	1169.0	
Deutschmark	388.6	390.9	
Swiss franc	466.1	468.9	
French franc	115.3	116.0	
Japanese yen (for 100)	492.2	495.2	
Dutch guilder	345.0	347.1	
Swedish crown	109.5	110.2	
Italian lire (for 100)	52.7	53.0	
Belgian franc (for 10)	189.8	190.9	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES			
Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.			
One Sterling	1.6985/95	U.S. dollar	
One U.S. dollar	1.1568/78	Canadian dollar	
	1.7585/95	Deutschmark	
	1.9830/40	Dutch guilders	
	1.4725/35	Swiss francs	
	36.20/24	Belgian francs	
	5.9260/10	French francs	
	1299/1300	Italian lire	
	138.50/60	Japanese yen	
	6.2570/20	Swedish crowns	
	6.8350/8400	Norwegian crowns	
	6.7250/7300	Danish crowns	
One ounce of gold	356.75/357.25	U.S. dollars	

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Show: 6:30

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Madonna and Warren Betty in **DICK TRACY**

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 699238

PLAZA

Laila Elwi in **THE INTOXICATED** (Arabic)

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The work under this tender consists of disassembling, packing, transporting from Amman South Power Station to Risha Power Station, reinstalling, commissioning and put into operation of two (2) gas turbines each of 30 MW capacity.

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Sealed tenders shall be submitted to the secretary of JEA Tendering Committee before 10:00 a.m. Amman time, 29 June 1991 at the JEA offices in Amman.

Tender documents are available at the address given below for a nonrefundable fee of JD 100 payable to JEA for each set of the tender documents.

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Sihanouk's rebel group accepts temporary truce

BANGKOK (AP) — The guerrilla forces of Prince Norodom Sihanouk Tuesday accepted an appeal for a temporary ceasefire in the war against the Vietnamese-installed Cambodian government in Phnom Penh.

France, Indonesia and U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar made the joint request Monday.

"We welcome the appeal, and we hope the Phnom Penh regime will accept the U.N. plan" to end 12 years of war, said Ek Sereyweath, a spokesman for Sihanouk's office in Bangkok. But he said Sihanouk, who leads a three-party guerrilla coalition fighting the government, may have his own comments.

Ek said there currently was no heavy fighting in zones controlled by the Sihanouk guerrillas. They have not launched any major attacks since mid-November, concentrating instead on economic and political development of their zones, he said.

The Khmer People's National Liberation Front will wait for an official notification from France, Indonesia and the U.N. secretary-general before announcing its position on the appeal, said a liberation front spokesman, Ok Serei Sopheak.

The guerrilla coalition had rejected previous truce proposals.

saying a ceasefire should come only in the context of a comprehensive political settlement.

No response from the Phnom Penh government was seen in Bangkok. In the past it has called for an immediate truce.

Each side has blamed the other for an upsurge to fighting at the start of this year's dry season despite international appeals for restraint.

The resistance said the government launched major counter-offensives, trying unsuccessfully to retake territory lost since a major Vietnamese troop pullout in September 1989.

The government said the guerrillas, especially the Khmer Rouge, were using tanks and artillery extensively for the first time to attack areas adjacent to the Thai border, particularly Battambang province.

In addition, the Khmer Rouge conducted "propaganda and intimidation campaigns to frighten our people into deserting Battambang," Cambodian President Heng Samrin said Saturday to troops returning from the Battambang front.

The efforts failed, state radio quoted him as saying. A text of the Monday broadcast was seen in Bangkok Tuesday.

The joint appeal asked that the ceasefire begin on May 1 and continue at least until peace talks planned for Jakarta, Indonesia, are completed, to create a favourable climate for success.

No date has been set for the

talks, but Indonesia has said it hoped they would be held in May.

Phnom Penh has said the arrangement of a truce should be one of the main topics at Jakarta. Phnom Penh also is expected to discuss with the guerrillas its reservations over the U.N. Security Council peace plan adopted last November.

Among other things, the government has rejected the proposed disarmament of all four Cambodian armies in the period before elections. Phnom Penh said it needed its army in case the Khmer Rouge, which massacred Cambodians during its rule in the 1970s, tried to retake power forcibly. It also said any agreement must include specific measures to prevent a Khmer Rouge return to power.

The appeal for a truce was issued by French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas and Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, whose nations co-chair the international conference on Cambodia, the main forum for an agreement.

The two ministers and Perez de Cuellar said they were concerned by reports of a recent upsurge in fighting in Cambodia.

The statement reminded the warring factions that the U.N. Security Council and the General Assembly had "unanimously called on all parties in the conflict to exercise the greatest restraint in order to create a climate favourable to producing an overall political settlement."



Chevenement says Gulf events prove him right

PARIS (R) — Former Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement, who quit in January over France's involvement in the Gulf war, has announced his return to politics.

Chevenement said events since the war, including the Kurdish refugee exodus, had proved him right.

His decision to stand again for the parliamentary seat he had to give up in 1988 when he became a cabinet member was seen as the first move in a presidential election bid.

A left-wing nationalist, Chevenement opposes several ideas generated by France's Gulf war coalition with Washington, notably a return to the NATO integrated command it left in 1966 or a scaling down of the French independent nuclear force.

He told a news conference at his home constituency of Belfort, in eastern France, that the deputy who took his place was stepping down to clear the way for a by-election.

It will probably be held in the summer.

Chevenement, 53, resigned on Jan. 29, when the air war against Iraq was in full swing and France had 12,000 men poised to join the land offensive that began a month later.

"You know that since last August (the start of the Gulf crisis) I was opposed to a war I thought avoidable and more likely to aggravate problems than to resolve them," he said.

He said he had offered to quit when France backed a U.N. resolution authorising force to evict Iraq's invasion troops from Kuwait.

"On Dec. 8, the head of state (President Francois Mitterrand) accepted the idea in principle. The precise date of my departure was deferred," Chevenement added.

Chevenement, a member of the ruling Socialist Party and a founder of the France-Iraq Friendship Society, later accused Mitterrand of abandoning France's traditional Third World sympathies to join an American-led "new world order."

A political commentator for the daily Le Monde said Monday's move was clearly the move to a presidential bid in May 1995, when Mitterrand's second term expires.

"Chevenement... has obviously started off on a solitary course for the presidency," Jean-Marie Colombani wrote.

The former defence chief has made no major public appearances since he quit, but has written articles in *Republique Moderne*, journal of his small Socialist et Republique wing of the party.

In the latest issue, dated Monday, Chevenement said events were now vindicating his anti-war stance.

"It would have been better not to have fought... to avert the destabilisation of an entire region (demonstrated) by the tragedy of the Kurds and the whole Iraqi people," he wrote.

He criticised military "expeditions" by the United States, Britain and France to set up safe havens for Kurds in northern Iraq "as was done in colonial times."

The victors in World War II—the United States, Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union—are permanent Council members and the only ones with a veto.

Former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt said "you are not a victorious power for eternity. For instance, how will (a united) Europe be represented in the Security Council?"

"Sooner or later there will probably be something instead of the existing system," he said.

The group proposed a world summit on global governance to reform the council. They said such a gathering would be a follow-up of the meetings in San Francisco and Bretton Woods in the 1940s that led to the creation of the United Nations.

"The United Nations is going to be 50 years old... it is surely time to renew it," said Shridath Ramphal, former Commonwealth secretary general from Guyana.

At least 50 people killed, 500 hurt in Costa Rica earthquake

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — A powerful earthquake struck this Central American country, killing at least 50 people and injuring 500 others when it toppled a hotel and destroyed scores of homes, authorities said Tuesday.

The quake, whose epicentre was in the Caribbean 180 kilometres (110 miles) east of San Jose, was felt throughout Costa Rica and parts of neighbouring Panama. Authorities said it hit Monday at 3:50 p.m. (2158 GMT) with an intensity of 7.4 on the Richter scale.

The worst damage was in Puerto Limon, the nation's main Caribbean port city, where the three-storey International Hotel collapsed and dozens of homes were destroyed.

"This place looks like one of these Hollywood apocalyptic movies. It felt like the world was coming to an end as everything moved and heaved," Rigoberto Perez, a resident of Puerto Limon, said by telephone.

At least 11 people died in the collapse of the two big building in Puerto Limon, Red Cross officials said.

Authorities said eight people died and 15 were injured in the Panamanian provinces of Bocas Del Toro and Chiriqui, near the Costa Rica border.

In Puerto Limon, home to 130,000 people, water and power were out as firefighters struggled with major fires into the night. Most residents in the region live

in one-storey wooden homes, and the hotel was among a handful of tall buildings.

The capital, San Jose, suffered extensive damage, but there were no immediate reports of widespread casualties in the city.

Much of the mountainous countryside was cut off when bridges were collapsed, roads were blocked by landslides and power lines severed.

Earthquakes are a frequent phenomenon in Central America, but Costa Rica rarely has such serious tremors. In 1976, more than 20,000 people were killed in a Guatemala quake, and 5,000 people were killed in Nicaragua in 1972.

A quake of magnitude 7 is considered a major earthquake, capable of widespread, heavy damage in populated areas.

The Richter scale is a gauge of the energy released by an earthquake, as measured by the ground motion recorded on a seismograph. Every increase of one number means that the ground motion is 10 times greater.

Costa Rican President Rafael Angel Calderon appealed to U.S. President George Bush and Latin American governments for medicine and other humanitarian aid. He said a first plane load of U.S. aid was arriving today.

Nicaragua was also sending helicopters to evacuate some of the injured and Mexico and Venezuela also promised help.

"Let us all embrace (each other) and may God help us so that we can help our brothers in

Limon," Calderon said in a nationwide radio broadcast.

In Puerto Limon, dozens of houses fell apart with the first jolt, since virtually all the city's homes are old and wooden.

Alberto Lee, a Red Cross official, told a news conference that a preliminary survey showed that 11 people died and 24 were injured in the collapse of the International Hotel and the office building.

The Customs house was also destroyed.

At a government-owned refinery on the outskirts of the port, a gasoline tank exploded, sending up a huge fireball, and an electrical short-circuit set a factory ablaze, the fire department said.

The local hospital was so badly damaged that all 28 patients had to be moved out, including 12 newborn babies who were flown to San Jose.

But dozens more injured, some seriously, could not be evacuated to San Jose because of blocked roads, hospital spokesman Antonio Matamoros said in a telephone interview.

"Many hospital patients and those injured during the earthquake are being treated in an emergency tent, set up in the street near the hospital," Red Cross spokesman Miguel Orozco said.

"The earthquake damage is really extensive... many houses are destroyed, and so are several office buildings. The atmosphere is stark and sad here."

Column 8

Pregnant legislators may have to call on doctor in the House

TOPEKA, Kansas (AP) — Representative Alex Scott is keeping surgical gloves and a medical clamp in his desk drawer just in case he has to make a few house calls. Three members of the Kansas House of Representatives are pregnant and due next month, and the state legislature has yet to wrap up its session. Two of the expectant mothers say if legislative business drags the session on, they'll be counting on Scott, a retired obstetrician, to be available to deliver their babies. "It's just good common sense to have something like this (medical equipment) on hand, especially when you have someone who could really hurry things along," said Scott. The legislature is currently on a break. Its wrap-up session begins Wednesday and is expected to last about a week. That could put legislative business and childbirth on a collision course for the three legislators, particularly if the session runs into overtime. State congresswoman Darlene Cornfield is expecting her third child on May 10. State Reps. Sheila Hochhauser and Susan Wagle expect to give birth toward the end of the month. Mrs. Wagle learned she was pregnant after she had won the primary election in her district. Mrs. Cornfield found out after she won in the general election.

Roh defends proposed treaty with Soviets

SEOUL (AP) — President Roh Tae-woo Tuesday defended his decision to conclude a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union, saying it would further develop relations between the once hostile nations.

Roh said, however, that the proposed treaty should not seek to forge a military alliance between the two nations.

In a surprise move in talks with

Roh in South Korea last week, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev proposed that the two sides conclude a treaty to further develop relations. Roh initially was quoted as accepting, but aides later said the treaty was being reconsidered.

The proposed treaty has aroused fears in some quarters that South Korea, closely allied with the United States, is moving

too fast toward the Soviet Union, with which Seoul established formal relations only seven months ago.

Roh said Tuesday the proposed treaty would be harmless if it does not seek a military alliance.

He said the Soviet Union has concluded similar non-military friendship treaties with Germany, France and Italy.

Perez de Cuellar calls for U.N. spy satellite

BORDEAUX (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has said the United Nations should have its own spy satellite to pinpoint troublespots around the world before violence erupted.

An independent U.N. observation satellite would have been able to show Iraq's "threatening behaviour" towards Kuwait before it invaded the emirate in August, he told a news conference.

Perez de Cuellar, talking after accepting an honorary doctorate from the University of Bordeaux, said the U.N. Security Council needed "independent and objective real-time information."

"I would like us to have an independent observation satellite... that would have enabled us for example to detect, even before Aug. 2, the Iraqi threat to Kuwait," he said.

"If we want to avoid catastrophes, the Security Council must be constantly examining flashpoints, intervening in a decisive way as soon as a conflict is

spotted and applying the U.N. charter's principles with the utmost consistency," Perez de Cuellar said.

The United States and the Soviet Union have spy satellites able to give high-definition images of the ground. They are usually used by the military, but commercial observation satellites have also been launched.

Perez de Cuellar also said the United Nations should reassess its methods to find a way of intervening in a country's affairs without violating the U.N. charter.

"We have to find a mechanism which permits interference, without violating the U.N. charter which specifies that the U.N. has 'no authority to intervene in matters of an essentially domestic nature,'" he said.

Specifically citing the Gulf war, Perez de Cuellar urged jurists to study this issue. He said the United Nations would cooperate with jurists weighing up the pros and cons of such a "right to interfere" for the world body.

Kohl wants government moved from Bonn to Berlin

BERLIN (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl said Tuesday he wanted Germany's parliament and government to move from Bonn to Berlin, the capital in name since unity last October, ruling party sources said.

The sources said Kohl ended months of silence on the issue to back Berlin "for historical reasons."

The chancellor was speaking at a meeting of parliamentary deputies from his Christian Democrats (CDU), who lead a centre-right coalition government.

The sources said Kohl favoured leaving some ministries in Bonn, including the sprawling Defence Ministry complex.

Parliament is expected to decide before summer recess in late June whether to move from Bonn. West Germany's provisional capital since 1949, after long-divided Berlin regained its traditional title last Oct. 3.

Berlin backers say the government can relocate within a decade for as little as 11 billion marks (\$6.3 billion), while Bonn's defenders say the move could cost up to 60 billion marks (\$34.3 billion) and would overburden a budget already strained by rebuilding Germany's east.

The debate has split normally disciplined party blocs in parliament along regional lines, with

Bonn backers centred in districts closer to Bonn as well as Bavaria, a traditionally rival region to Prussian Berlin.

In a separate development Germany's constitutional court ruled Tuesday that people whose property in East Germany was seized under Soviet military occupation between 1945 and 1949 were not entitled to get it back.

But it said the former owners were entitled to compensation from Germany for their loss.

Some 3.3 million hectares (8.2 million acres), mostly the hereditary estates of Prussian nobles which covered a third of East German agricultural land, were broken up and given to peasants or converted into collective farms under the post-war Soviet occupation.

The treaty uniting east and west Germany last October allowed people to reclaim property seized by East Germany after the Communist state was set in 1949.

But it excluded the 1945-49 land seizures because they were carried out in the legal vacuum of a postwar occupation zone.

The constitutional court said that in the interests of equality before the law, people who lost their property before 1949 should also be compensated.

Conference wants to change U.N. veto rights

SALTSJOBADEN, Sweden (AP) — Political figures from around the world have said some Security Council members should lose their veto rights in a broad restructuring of the United Nations.

In a 40-page report, delegates at a two-day conference said the United Nations should be strengthened as the pivot of a global government system with increased powers to settle disputes and regulate the arms trade.

Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson said the proposals would restrict the sovereignty of U.N. members and counter the United States' dominance in world affairs.

About 30 government officials, former leaders and representatives of development agencies from 23 countries took part in the conference at Saltsjobaden, a seaside resort near Stockholm. They included Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, former British Prime Minister Edward Heath and former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere.

The conference report did not name specific Security Council members that should lose their veto. But it said confidence in the United Nations should be bolstered, and a way to do this would be to change the Council's membership and voting system.

The victors in World War II—the United States, Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union—are permanent Council members and the only ones with a veto.

Former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt said "you are not a victorious power for eternity. For instance, how will (a united) Europe be represented in the Security Council?"

"Sooner or later there will probably be something instead of the existing system," he said.

The group proposed a world summit on global governance to reform the council. They said such a gathering would be a follow-up of the meetings in San Francisco and Bretton Woods in the 1940s that led to the creation of the United Nations.

"The United Nations is going to be 50 years old... it is surely time to renew it," said Shridath Ramphal, former Commonwealth secretary general from Guyana.

Pretoria urges foreign investment

LONDON (AP) — President F. W. de Klerk appealed Tuesday for foreign investment in South Africa, saying economic development is crucial to the country's political progress.

"Constitutional reform must be underpinned by a vibrant economy," De Klerk told a news conference.

"From our point of view, economic development goes hand in hand with constitutional development. The high percentage of unemployment is counterproductive and plays into the hands of radicals who would like to see the continuation of disruption."

He added: "Any new order will be faced with high expectations, economic development is the only answer."

De Klerk met Monday night with British Prime Minister John Major at 10 Downing Street. He

confirmed that British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd will visit South Africa, but Major did not immediately accept an open invitation.

De Klerk said he and Major briefly discussed U.S. sanctions with South Africa but he did not seek the prime minister's intervention.

"I am in direct contact with the U.S. administration on a regular basis and I do not need any go-between," De Klerk said.

Citing the European Community's recent decision to lift sanctions, De Klerk said he was confident that South Africa's isolation was ending.

"Markets closed to us only a year or two ago are now open again," he said.

"We also found new markets even when sanctions were the 'in' thing... and we have a blossom-

ing trade in new markets where we were not active three, four and five years ago." He gave no details of these markets.

Trade with other African states has doubled in the past year, he added.

De Klerk said he had a "very friendly" meeting Tuesday morning with Neil Kinnock, leader of the opposition Labour Party, though he didn't get the response he wanted.

"Having heard his account, I remain convinced that it is still too early to lift economic sanctions," Kinnock told reporters after an hour with the South African leader.

Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, a staunch opponent of sanctions, who plans to visit South Africa later this year, also spent an hour with De Klerk Tuesday.

White House sees no impropriety in travels of Bush chief of staff

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House has scrambled to the defence of President George Bush's chief of staff, saying there was nothing improper in his use of government aircraft for personal and political business.

Senior officials attempted to control the political damage from weekend revelations that Chief of Staff John Sununu used military jets for more than 60 trips over the past two years for either personal or Republican Party business.

"We don't think there's anything wrong," White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said in a daily briefing dominated by questions on Sununu. "There's no impropriety that's been shown here."

He said officials were preparing a detailed report for release to the media on Sununu's travels and the amount he reimbursed the government for personal trips.

Sununu, whose iron-fisted rule of the White House staff have angered friend and foe alike, returned Monday by government plane from his home state of New Hampshire after a weekend

there.

Fitzwater said Bush had been on the phone with Sununu about his flights over the weekend and again Monday morning.

The White House said Sununu's use of government aircraft, as opposed to commercial planes, was based on a 1987 policy by President Ronald Reagan that allowed such flights for the White House chief of staff and national security adviser.

The rationale was that these two high-ranking officials should maintain voice contact with the White House at all times through secure communications equipment.

Fitzwater said Sununu "decides which trips he takes, and of course they're all subject to the rules and regulations with regard to reimbursement."

A Washington Post report Sunday estimated the total cost to taxpayers of his flights at over half a million dollars. His standard reimbursement would be at commercial rates, far cheaper than the cost of using a military jet.

The Post said the flights included 27 trips to New Hamp-



John Sununu

shire, where he had served as governor, or to nearby Boston. It said he also made trips to Colorado ski resorts and to Republican fund-raisers.

U.S. News and World Report magazine said Sununu far outdid two of Reagan's chiefs of staff in use of government planes. It said Donald Regan and James Baker made 10 trips each over a combined six-year period in the White House post.

The air force says it costs \$3,945 an hour to operate a C-20, the 12-passenger military version of a typical corporate jet. That excludes salaries of the five-member crew.

Prince courts new controversy with attack on Britain's education system

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles, who already has a reputation for controversy, has provoked a new furor with a scathing attack on Britain's education system that strays close to the forbidden area of party politics.

Newspapers gave front page prominence Tuesday to remarks in which the heir to the throne branded Britain an educational disgrace and blamed underfunding and fashionable theories about child development.

In a speech Monday to mark the anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth, he said the education system neglected literature and left children ill-prepared to cope when they left

school.

"It is almost incredible that in Shakespeare's land one child in seven leaves primary school functionally illiterate," the prince said.

"Here in Britain we seem to get it wrong almost before we have begun... In France, Italy and Belgium every child under five receives nursery education from the state. Here, less than half of our children have that right," he said.

The prince's comments edge close to breaking an unwritten rule in which the royal family stays out of political debate. But neither of Britain's two leading parties complained because the

speech provided them with political ammunition.

The opposition Labour Party saw it as a critique of the Conservative government's squeeze on education spending, while the government said the prince was targeting left-leaning educationalists.

The Guardian newspaper reported the Prince of Wales's remarks had split educationalists between those who were "utterly delighted" and many who saw his views as outdated.



Prince Charles

Battle of Agincourt. "We hope he has started as he intends to go on," the editorial read.

Audrey hepburn honoured

NEW YORK (AP) — Audrey Hepburn was honoured by colleagues paying tribute to the enchanting actress who bewitched fans as a princess in Roman Holiday, a cockney flower girl in My Fair Lady and the outrageous Holly Golightly in Breakfast At Tiffany's.

"Suddenly there was that dazzling creature, looking like a wide-eyed doe prancing through the forest," recalled Billy Wilder, who directed Miss Hepburn in Sabrina.

"It took exactly five minutes for everybody on that set to fall in love with her." Wilder was one of a dozen actors and directors to speak at the Lincoln Centre Film Society tribute to the 62-year-old actress. Miss Hepburn's big break came in 1951 at age 22 when the writer Colette spotted her and asked her to play Gigi on Broadway. Her first major movie role, Roman Holiday, followed in 1953. She won an Academy Award for her portrayal of a princess who goes out on the town incognito and falls in love with an American reporter.

"It was my good luck during that summer in Rome to be the first of her cinema swings, to hold out my hand and help her keep her balance as she did her spins and pirouettes and made practically everybody in the world fall in love with her," said Gregory Peck, who played the reporter.

"There will never be a sequel to Roman Holiday, but without a doubt the princess has become a queen." From a box on the side of the stage, Miss Hepburn, radiant in a flowing white gown topped by a sparkling gold-and-aqua bolero, threw peck a kiss. Later, she thanked the many actors, directors, photographers and technicians she worked with over the years, saying in her charmingly self-deprecating fashion that they "gave so much to a skinny broad and turned her into a marketable commodity."